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ABSTRACT

This book is intended for educators who want to know more about the theoretical foundations of the Responsive Education Program (REP), how the program works, how successful it has been, and what is required for implementation. The book also may be useful to instructors and staff developers who are training people to work in the field of education. Chapters one through five provide an overview and theoretical background through discussions of "responsiveness," the general rationale of the program, and the rationale for and implementation of the goals of the program. Chapters six and seven provide discussions of learner objectives and principles and program teaching guidelines. Emphasis is placed on the integration of the learning conditions that support the program goals. Chapters eight through ten present applications of the responsive model through a position paper on language and reading, descriptions of the classroom, and description of staff development. Chapters eleven and twelve provide discussions of evaluation and implementation. Appendix A is a list of sites in which the program can be observed in operation. (Author/RH)

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# THE RESPONSIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM

## FOR CHILDREN AND ADULT LEARNERS

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# THE RESPONSIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM

by


THE STAFF OF THE RESPONSIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM

Allan Abrams
Margot Biestman
Bart Bödy
Natividad DeAnda
Rosemary De La Torre
Josefina Diaz de Leon
Francione Lewis
Jean Monroe
Nicholas Rayder
Ilene Storace
Julie Stulac
JoEllyn Taylor
Denis Thoms
Michael Yearout
Joanne Yinger

Coordinated by
Francione Lewis

*Edited by*
*Julia Cheever*

Denis Thoms, Director
Francione Lewis, Assistant Director
Nicholas Rayder, Director of Evaluation
The Responsive Education Program
Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development
1855 Folsom Street
San Francisco, California 94103


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D. F. T.

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## PREFACE

The writings in this book represent both a culmination of developmental effort in the Responsive Education Program, and a point of departure for further development and refinement. As long as learners have opportunities to grow and learn, education must continue as a dynamic force. The Responsive Education Program is, first of all, a staff that continues to learn and to grow. It is also a set of goals, objectives, principles and processes for learning. We are firmly committed to the beliefs set forth in this book, and their potential application in a complex, pluralistic, and dynamic world. It is our wish that the readers and users of these writings become more responsive to all learners.

The Responsive Education Program Staff
Denis Thoms, Director

# INTRODUCTION

Dear Reader:

We invite you to discover what we know and believe about the Responsive Education Program. This book is a response to people in the school districts with which we work and other interested people who want to know more about the theoretical foundation of the program, how the program works, what success it has had, and what is required to implement it. We also anticipate that it may be useful to instructors and staff developers who are training people who will work in the field of education. The book describes why we do what we do, what is needed to make the program successful, and what it may look like when it is functioning well. It does not provide the learning experiences, processes, or procedures for learning to work with children or teachers in a Responsive way. That is a different book.*

## Background of the Program

The Responsive Education Program has been the result of our training, development, and evaluation staff's interaction with and responses to the staffs of 14 school districts throughout the United States. Approximately 38 staff developers, 659 teaching staff members, and 6,500 children in 330 primary grade classrooms are currently participating in the program. They are located in 14 school districts in 13 states.

The goals of the program are to support cognitive growth by promoting the development of problem-solving abilities; to support affective growth by fostering the development of healthy self-concept; and to support social growth by promoting the development of culturally pluralistic behaviors and attitudes.

## The Responsive Education Program's Relationship to Other Approaches to Early Childhood Education

Current approaches to early childhood education vary in values and beliefs about teaching and learning.

*Available in November, 1976.

The resulting practical experiences of adults and children differ in the nature and control of curriculum objectives, content, process, resources, and evaluation, and in the focus of behavior change. We can place these varying approaches on a continuum with those that are more teacher centered at one end and those that are more child centered at the other. To clarify the Responsive Education Program's relationship to other approaches, we can use a few representative descriptive phrases to characterize the approaches at each end of the continuum, and then identify our program's position.

Approaches to Early Childhood Education



| Teacher Centered | Child Centered |
|---|---|
| • Specific behaviorial objectives are established in advance by the district and teachers. They focus primarily on acquisition of academic skills, brought about by changes in or improvements on children's weaknesses or defects.<br>• Curriculum content is designed and sequenced in advance.<br>• Adults present prescribed lessons or structured individual learning experiences. External rewards are used as motivation. | • General Objectives focus on holistic development of children. Social, cognitive, physical and psychological growth is promoted as children engage in activities related to their interests and preferences.<br>• Content varies; children undertake their own learning activities with variety of material.<br>• Children take an active role in learning and discovery. Children's intrinsic motivation is relied upon. |

The Responsive Education Program seeks to integrate the best of two worlds. It focuses on learners' need for relevance and self-sufficiency as motivation for learning, thinking, and behaving creatively and meaningfully. At the same time, we are concerned with the accountability expected of teachers. The Responsive Education Program is based on a belief in building a pluralistic society by strengthening educational experiences to respond to learners as individuals and as group members. In this program, the teacher as the learning facilitator structures the environment by learning about the children and working with them to create meaningful learning experiences that enable children to ask and answer their own questions. The Responsive Education Program can be placed on the continuum with the following descriptors that provide a few clues to the values, beliefs, and behaviors inherent in this approach.

Responsive Education Program

| Teacher Centered<br>Structured | Teacher Facilitates<br>Child-Centered Experience | Child Centered<br>Unstructured |
|---|---|---|
| Teacher/Child | Teacher<br>Child/Teacher | Child/Teacher |

Curriculum Objectives:

General objectives focus on children developing cognitive and social abilities by using problem-solving processes; developing healthy self-concepts; and developing skills for productive functioning in a pluralistic society. Learning experiences build on children's strengths. Specific objectives are set by teachers with learners and set by learners.

Curriculum Content and Resources

Content is open with a focus on children gaining knowledge about themselves, others, and their relationships with others while gaining academic skills. Learning centers focus on the acquisition of cognitive processes and academic skills through activities relevant to children's interests and concerns. A learning theme integrates curriculum activities. Materials and adults represent the ethnicity and culture of the children in the classroom and others.

Curriculum Process

Adults guide children to raise their own questions, seek their own answers, increase self-sufficiency, work alone and with others productively, and use problem-solving processes to acquire skills and concepts. Children share and interact with one another.

## How To Use This Book

To enable you to find out about the program in the way that is most useful to you, we have designed the book so that it can be used in a number of ways.

You may wish to find the answer to a particular question. If you are raising any of the following questions, you may find the response in the chapters listed on the right:

| Question | Refer to Chapters on: |
|---|---|
| What is the Responsive Education Program? | "Responsiveness" Defined |
| What does it look like? | Principles and Teaching Guidelines of the Responsive Education Program |

| Question | Refer to Chapters on: |
|---|---|
| | Classroom Description of the Responsive Education Program<br><br>Staff Development in the Responsive Education Program |
| What is the theoretical base of the program?<br><br>What are the goals of the program? | Rationale of the Responsive Education Program<br><br>Cognitive Development in the Responsive Education Program<br><br>Healthy Self-Concept in the Responsive Education Program<br><br>Cultural Pluralism in the Responsive Education Program<br><br>Learner Objectives of the Responsive Education Program |
| Does the program work?<br><br>What is required to get it started? | Evaluation in the Responsive Education Program<br><br>Implementation Guide |
| What does the teacher have to do? | Language and Reading in the Responsive Education Program<br><br>Classroom Description of the Responsive Education Program<br><br>Latter parts of chapters on Cognitive Development, Self-Concept, and Cultural Pluralism in the Responsive Education Program<br><br>Staff Development in the Responsive Education Program |
| Where can I see it in action? | Appendix A, School Districts Participating in the Responsive Education Program |

If you wish to get an overview of the book or a particular chapter, you can refer to the marginal phrases (printed on each page in green ink) that summarize the main ideas of each chapter.

You may prefer to move through the material in the order in which it is sequenced. This sequence provides:

1. An overview and theoretical background through discussions of "Responsiveness," the general rationale of the program, and the rationale for and implementation of the goals of the program. (Chapters 1-5.)

2. An integration or synthesis of the learning conditions that support the goals through discussions of the learner objectives and the principles and teaching guidelines of the program. (Chapters 6 and 7.)

3. Applications of the theory through a position paper on language and reading, descriptions of the classroom, and description of staff development. (Chapters 8-10.)

4. Information about implementation of the program through discussions of evaluation and implementation and a list of sites in which the program can be observed in operation. (Chapters 11 and 12 and Appendix A.)

We hope you will find the book as useful for your discovery as we have found its development to be stimulating to our growth.

Francione Lewis
Project Coordinator

# 1 "RESPONSIVENESS" DEFINED

An Illustration of "Responsiveness" in a Classroom

*A child on the playground, kicking a ball--practicing--his tongue pressed to his upper lip. He kicks the ball higher, farther, and farther each day--an effort--accomplishment--pride.*

The teacher observes what is important to a child.

*In the classroom, I asked this child if he were willing to work with me using art and writing about his kicking the ball. Other children were working on various projects and games. He nodded and smiled.*

She offers the child a chance to express his experience in art, language, and writing.

*I asked him to remember the day when he first tried to kick his ball, then the next day, a month later, and now. I gave him three pieces of paper and a basket of crayons, and asked him to draw on one sheet a picture of himself kicking the ball the first time, on the second sheet a picture of himself a few weeks ago, and on the third sheet a picture of himself now, as he had just kicked the ball. I asked him to describe each picture and I wrote what he said: "First I didn't like to not kick high. Then I did kick a little bit high. Now, I can kick the ball very high." His eyes glowed with pride.*

*When I moved on to another group of children, he chose to stay to print his words underneath my writing. Later he came to me to read his work and I asked him to read it to a friend who also had a book to read to him.*

*He stapled his papers between two pieces of construction paper and made a book--a sentence for each page--a story in progression--his story. He can tell it because it happened to him. He keeps this book in the classroom. He can read it to his parents. He can read it to his friends. They learn from him. He becomes a valuable resource to them when they are writing about their actions that tell a story.*[1]

Children have an opportunity to share and learn from one another.

This incident occurred in a kindergarten classroom in which a teacher and a child worked together in a "responsive" way. An observant teacher was able to offer a child an opportunity to put his experience

1

*"...an effort--accomplishment--pride."*

into words. The child was learning to describe what he had found out about himself, developing his self-concept while also learning skills of reading and writing. The teacher respected his natural language. This illustration may serve as an introduction to "responsiveness"--a way of teaching and a way of learning.

## Introduction

"Responsiveness" in the Responsive Education Program is the process of seeking to respond sensitively and appropriately to learners' experience and needs. A Responsive approach is used both with children in the classroom and with teachers, teacher assistants, and other adults who are learning to work with children in this way.

"Responsiveness" assumes that individuals come to a learning situation with valuable personal experience, strengths, and skills. It provides opportunities for learners to use these assets in developing new skills and abilities. It assumes that learners are naturally growth-seeking, if growth is supported and nurtured, and respects learners' individual pacing and learning styles.

Responsive education supports affective and social as well as cognitive development. To prepare learners to cope with pressing social problems as well as their own needs, the program seeks to help learners think creatively and critically while problem solving, develop healthy self-concepts, and learn to interact democratically with others.

"Responsiveness" is the process of seeking to respond sensitively and appropriately to learners' experience and needs.

"Responsiveness" focuses on the way an idea is presented and a skill is taught and learned as well as on the mastery of a skill. Adults and children are helped to set realistic expectations for themselves in learning. Teachers or staff developers* provide a learning environment that has flexibility within a structure, allowing for spontaneity and adjustment. They set appropriate limits and offer learners choices within those limits. Learners take increasing responsibility for their own learning as they become ready to do so.

---

*"Teachers" refers both to teachers and to teacher assistants. A "staff developer" is a teacher trainer or a supervisor of teachers, a person who helps teachers implement the Responsive Education Program.

Teachers and staff developers are sensitive to their own needs as well as the needs of those with whom they work.

Using curriculum materials "responsively" means adapting or creating materials in a way that enables adults and children to learn by using their existing skills and experience, moving from the familiar to the unfamiliar. Curriculum areas (e.g., language, social studies, art) are presented in conjunction with other areas, rather than in isolation, and in context of real-life situations. Learners are guided to learn from mistakes instead of being demeaned for them.

In a Responsive learning environment, individuals have opportunities to learn more about themselves in relationship to their own and other cultures. They identify and respect similarities and differences in learning styles and life styles, and they interact and share with other learners.

They learn from experimentation and discovery much of the time. They have opportunities to "integrate" or evaluate and find personal meaning in learning experiences so that what is learned may be applied to a new situation.

Responsive teachers and staff developers seek to find out what kind of support is appropriate for learners in a particular situation and then provide that support or refer learners to other resources.

This definition of "responsiveness" has grown out of the work of Responsive Education Program staff members and of people who have participated in the program. The following sections of this chapter expand upon our definition.

Part I describes the basic assumption, goals, and approach of the program. Part II outlines characteristics of a Responsive teaching/learning process, and Part III compares some Responsive teaching practices with practices that are not Responsive. Part IV describes some attitudes and ways of working of a Responsive teacher or staff developer. Part V, "Characteristics of a Responsive Person," presents excerpts from personal definitions contributed by program staff members and school district staff members, parents, and children who have participated in the program.

## I. Basic Assumption, Goals, and Approach of the Responsive Education Program

"Responsiveness" assumes that learners bring valuable experience and skills to a situation.

"Responsiveness" is based on the assumption that a learner (adult or child) comes to a learning situation with skills and valuable personal life experience. It seeks to use, expand, and enhance the learner's existing skills and experience, making a bridge from the familiar to the unfamiliar.

The goals of the program are to support cognitive development, healthy self-concept and cultural pluralism.

The three goals of the Responsive Education Program are to support learners' cognitive growth by promoting the development of problem-solving abilities, to support affective growth by fostering the development of healthy self-concept, and to support social growth by promoting the development of culturally pluralistic attitudes and behaviors.

Learners are encouraged to take initiative in formulating or recognizing questions or problems to be resolved, to think creatively and critically in gathering information and evaluating solutions, and to apply knowledge to new situations. They are guided to acquire and use academic skills (e.g., reading, mathematics) while solving meaningful problems.

To develop and maintain healthy self-concepts, learners are encouraged to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses in order to set their own goals and set realistic expectations for ways of reaching those goals. Expectations that are too low may prevent an individual from reaching his or her potential; expectations that are too high may contribute to self-denigration when expectations are not met.

In support of cultural pluralism, learners are given opportunities to identify and describe experiences and beliefs from their own and other cultures and to compare them. As they become aware of similarities and differences and of when and how they tend to judge unfairly, they may gain respect for different perspectives and value self-determination and self-legitimization of individuals and groups. They may also become more socially conscious, and more able to work with others to handle appropriately situations in which differences are not valued or supported.

In a Responsive learning environment, teachers and staff developers not only present information and materials and teach basic skills, but also seek to do so in a way that supports these three goals.

A Responsive approach entails:
- valuing learners' own style of learning or teaching
- valuing learners' own experience
- providing meaningful learning experiences
- supporting the process of integration through finding personal meaning in learning experiences.

## Valuing Learners' Own Style of Learning or Teaching

One aspect of a Responsive approach is identifying, respecting, and valuing a child's or an adult's individual style of learning or teaching. As learners grow, they may discover other styles and expand their repertoire to include new styles that they find rewarding or satisfying.

Teachers and staff developers provide choices for learners at various stages of development. They do not expect that all learners will learn at the same pace or in the same way.

## Valuing Learners' Own Experience

No single curriculum or set of materials is right for all teachers, groups of adults, or children. A Responsive approach entails adapting or creating materials in ways that will enable adults and children to use their own experience and skills in learning. If children know their personal experience is valued, their self-concept is enhanced, and they may become more motivated to learn academic skills.

In language activities, for example, a teacher of young (kindergarten or first-grade) children may listen to children as they play and speak naturally with one another. She may take dictation from this spontaneous language and read what she has written to a group of children. The children may read back their own sentences. Later, the teacher may find that some of the words from the children's spontaneous language are used in the texts they read. The children may recognize some of these words more easily because they have spoken and read them first in the context of their own experience.

A teacher with older (second- or third-grade) children may ask children to read in their texts (if texts are required) or library books. She may then ask the children how the situation or characters in the story resemble situations or characters they know, and how they differ. This technique may help them to relate what they read to their own experience.

## Providing Meaningful Learning Experiences

"Responsive" learning experiences focus on learners' interests, their ethnic and cultural

"This is a funny bear. He is pink. I do not like this big pink bear."
Katy

*"Responsiveness" is helping children use their experience, feelings, language.*

identity, and the skills they need to increase their life chances. Learning experiences often draw on several related curriculum areas and present or simulate real-life situations. Reinforcement is provided in the form of new experiences rather than as a drill.

For example, a concept or skill introduced in a listening or reading activity may be extended in art and then in spoken or written language. Mathematics may be taught in relationship to practical needs (e.g., children use addition and subtraction as they learn to make change). Learners find out about their own and other cultures through multiethnic resources and opportunities for sharing and interaction.

Supporting Integration of Learning Experiences

Another aspect of a Responsive approach is providing time and opportunities for integration, the process of finding personal meaning in a learning experience. Integration may occur almost immediately or some time after an experience. It can be said to have taken place when a person can transfer a concept or skill to another situation (e.g., when a child recognizes in a book words she has previously read in the context of her dictated natural language; when a child interacts with others in a new way that he learned about in a previous situation).

## II. Characteristics of a Responsive Teaching/ Learning Process

The characteristics of a Responsive teaching/ learning process can be stated in terms of the opportunities it provides learners. Adults and children have opportunities to:

A Responsive teaching/learning process can be characterized by the opportunities it provides learners to make decisions.

1. Set realistic personal goals and expectations.
2. Make choices within limits.
   a. Choose an alternative assignment. (The alternative is related to the original assignment. It may be a way of reaching the same goal with different materials or it may be a personal response to the assignment in one or more media, verbal or nonverbal.)
   b. Make decisions and take action on the basis of what they would gain or lose by a particular course of action, and afterwards evaluate what was actually gained or lost.

> "To me, 'responsiveness' is a minute form of democracy. Options, choices resources, rules, limits and consequences exist within a democratic society. One is free to set personal goals, make decisions, and take action. If rules and limits are ignored or exceeded, there are inevitable consequences. Responsive behaviors produce a wider range of choice and resources."[2]

3. Work at their own pace and level and in their own style.
4. Work, at different times, alone, with partners, in groups with others of the same ability, and in groups with others of varying abilities.
5. Choose from a variety of materials and resources.
6. Ask questions to clarify feelings and thoughts and to solve problems.

7. Learn from experimentation and discovery much of the time (more often than from being lectured to or told answers).

8. Have a clear focus and direction in learning activities.

9. Use other learners as resources--to get support, to get information about themselves and their actions, and to identify similarities and differences between themselves and others.

10. Say "no" when it is appropriate to their needs and the situation (e.g., not be forced to share when there is a need for privacy).

11. Acknowledge their strengths and weaknesses (without demeaning themselves).

12. Take credit for what they have accomplished.

13. Find personal meaning in a learning experience (integrate), and plan the next steps in learning.

Note: Some learners may be unable or unwilling to learn at a particular time or in a particular situation, even if the teaching process is "responsive." Some may learn in spite of "unresponsive" teaching (e.g., no choices given, too many choices given, demeaning comments made). Factors other than the teaching process may influence learning.

*"A Trust Walk"... Children learn to guide and trust each other.*

## III. Further Clarification of Responsive Teaching

As further clarification of "responsiveness," it may be helpful to point out some practices that are not "responsive." The list below compares some teaching practices that are "responsive" with some that are not.

| "Responsiveness" is not: | "Responsiveness" is: |
|---|---|
| 1. Giving free choice with no direction or focus. | 1. Giving choices with a focus and direction. |
| 2. Giving too many choices at once. (Too many choices may prevent learners from making any choice.) | 2. Guiding learners to make decisions that are appropriate for their abilities in a particular situation. |
| 3. Manipulating learners by asking "would you like to?" when really meaning "you have to" or "I'll be disappointed if you don't" (instilling guilt). | 3. Providing learners opportunities to have decisions honored (e.g., asking learners whether they are willing to do what is asked and accepting "no" if they are not willing) and when learners' decisions may not be appropriate,* being clear about not offering opportunities for decision making (e.g., stating "I am not giving you a choice in this particular instance because..."). |
| 4. Allowing learners to experiment with many resources and materials and leaving learning to chance (failing to guide discovery learning). | 4. Guiding learners to discover a concept or what is important to them after they have had an opportunity to experiment. |

*Offering choices would not be appropriate if health or safety were at stake. It would not be appropriate for a child who only likes to play outside to be permitted to play outside if he has not done his work.

| "Responsiveness" is not: | "Responsiveness" is: |
|---|---|
| 5. Giving children or adults freedom to do whatever they want, without setting expectations and limits and considering one's own needs. | 5. Setting and helping others to set realistic expectations and limits. |
| 6. Asking questions that do not help learners (e.g., rhetorical, inconsequential, heckling, or confusing questions, or questions that demand only yes/no answers), or asking too many questions. | 6. Asking meaningful questions that help learners clarify a situation, problem, feeling, or interaction. |
| 7. Providing an environment that contains many games, toys, materials, self-correcting worksheets, task cards, and machines, but little or no teacher/student interaction (theory of "teacher-proof" material). | 7. Providing an environment that contains goal-related materials while also keeping a focus on the importance of teacher/student interaction. |
| 8. Providing an environment that is overstimulating (too many activities going on at once, too many materials, too much on the walls). | 8. Providing an environment that represents the learners but does not present too much at one time. |
| 9. Directing learners in an authoritarian way. | 9. Planning with and for learners. |
| 10. Assessing learners only on the basis of scores on standardized tests or performance on a few particular tasks. | 10. Using a variety of means of assessing learners (e.g., ongoing anecdotal records, observation of what children actually do and say in the classroom). |

| "Responsiveness" is not: | "Responsiveness" is: |
|---|---|
| 11. Having a teacher discard a text or manuals without helping the teacher develop a different structure or materials to take their place. | 11. Helping a teacher to modify a text, lesson, or curriculum plan to suit a child's experience or providing or helping a teacher develop other materials the teacher feels comfortable with and is able to use. |
| 12. Having a teacher change the classroom arrangement to a more open classroom or to learning centers before the teacher is ready to manage the new environment. | 12. Helping a teacher arrange the classroom in a way that the teacher understands and that the teacher and children can use constructively. |

## IV. Responsive Attitudes and Ways of Working

"Responsiveness" is characterized by certain attitudes and ways of working.

### Respecting Natural Pacing and Growth

"Responsiveness" assumes that human beings are naturally growth-seeking, provided that growth is supported and nurtured, and that they may grow at different rates. It respects natural pacing and growth.

"Responsiveness" respects individual pacing and growth.

For example, some teachers who are learning to use children's ideas during learning experiences can learn best by moving slowly, using children's ideas during one lesson of the day at first. Other teachers may be able to move at a faster pace and need to have opportunities to move ahead so that they will not be needlessly held back.

A teacher's rate of growth toward becoming "responsive" depends on the amount of time and energy the individual is able or willing to invest, the amount of support offered, the individual's past experience and the amount of change required or desired.

## Deciding What is Appropriate

Another aspect of being a "responsive" teacher or staff developer is deciding what will enable oneself and others to function most effectively in a particular situation.

Responding appropriately requires finding out what materials and activities best match a learner's or group of learners' experience, interests, and level of development. At times, helping learners use their own ideas to discover something for themselves is most appropriate; at other times (and less frequently), giving them information is sufficient for effective learning. Sometimes responding appropriately may require giving more direction than usual (e.g., when a child has been overstimulated; when an adult has not completed a task required in his or her job).

Responding appropriately requires knowledge of the learner and the learning situation.

In some situations, it is appropriate for the teacher to set rules for the classroom. In other situations, it is appropriate for the teacher to discuss with the children the consequences of different behaviors and work with the children to decide on limits. It is also sometimes appropriate for the teacher to ask the children to share in planning (e.g., deciding on activities and materials needed for a project the children have initiated).

At times it is appropriate to provide opportunities for adults or children to share and interact with others in a group; at other times, it is appropriate to enable them not to share, to keep something private. Sometimes it is "responsive" to accept a learner's resistance and statement of "no"; sometimes it is responsive to say "no" to a learner. For instance, children may sometimes engage in activities that jeopardize their own or others' health, safety, or effective functioning. At such times, they need to be stopped and redirected.

Responding appropriately means attending carefully and sympathetically to negative as well as positive feelings and statements, and helping learners use their negative feelings in ways that are socially acceptable (e.g., a child draws a picture of what he or she would like to do but is not allowed to do).

Part of being responsive is being sensitive to one's own needs as well as to the needs of others.

Being Responsive means:
- being flexible
- recognizing degrees of "responsiveness"
- acknowledging and learning from mistakes.

Being Flexible

A Responsive learning environment has a structure that is flexible. What is "responsive" for a learner or group of learners today may not be "responsive" for the same learner or group of learners tomorrow. A staff developer or teacher should be willing to modify a lesson plan if it is inappropriate for a particular situation or group of learners.

For example, on a day before vacation, children may be excited and jumpy. On such a day, they may need to play outdoors or work on a large art project to express their excitement. The rest of the day they may need more direction than usual, with few choices of activities. On another day, when children are calm, the teacher may give them more choices of activities, or they may work on one idea or theme in several different media--art, drama, writing, movement.

Recognizing Degrees of "Responsiveness"

Sometimes it may not be possible to be "responsive" to oneself and others at the same time. It is important for teachers or staff developers to recognize when they are reacting to something unrelated to the classroom or learning environment. For instance, a teacher may be worrying about something that is happening at home and feeling irritable. When teachers or staff developers are not able to be as "responsive" to others as usual, they should communicate this to those whom they teach or with whom they work.

Acknowledging and Learning from Mistakes

Part of being "responsive" is recognizing that human beings make mistakes and may acknowledge them and learn and grow from them. Teachers or staff developers who think they should not make mistakes may disparage themselves for making mistakes and may not grow from them or let others grow from their mistakes.

## V. Characteristics of a Responsive Person

Some school district staff members, parents, children, and program staff members in the Responsive Education Program were asked to contribute their personal definitions of "responsiveness" or a "responsive" person. Excerpts from these definitions provide a summary of the characteristics of a Responsive person.

A Responsive person:
- expresses authentic feelings appropriately
- is willing to adapt
- is sensitive
- has empathy

1. Expresses Authentic Feelings Appropriately

"One who responds appropriately to a situation or person by actively expressing resentment, anger, pleasure, joy (negative as well as positive responses)."
Margot Biestman, Responsive Education Program staff

"One who reacts, whether favorably or not, to a situation. One who shows some vital signs such as clapping hands, smiling, shouting, etc...."
Annie Mack, Teacher Assistant, Reno, Nev.

"One who feels good enough about oneself that one can react openly to students and their needs."
Joan Dodd, Parent, Berkeley, Calif.

2. Is Willing to Adapt

"...to me, responsiveness means surveying the group, the individuals within the group. It means taking into account the kind of day, time of day, amount of work and play thus far...not being afraid to adjust me and my lesson and my manner to meet the needs, desires and attitudes of my children."
Georgann Throckmorton, Teacher, Reno, Nev.

3. Is Sensitive

"...a 'responsive' person...reacts with feeling, warmth, intelligence, and in such a way that the individual or group will profit from the experience."
Douglas Carver, Administrator, Lebanon, N.H.

"The teacher was nice and quiet most of the time, so when she told us to stop [when we were breaking rules], we did."
Hugh Dodd, sixth grade, remembering his first grade in Follow Through, Berkeley, Ca.

4. Has Empathy

"One who makes a genuine effort to have empathy with the person or persons with whom he/she is interacting. A responsive person must have genuine respect for differences and be prepared to build on strengths rather than weaknesses."
Vivian Barrett, Parent Coordinator, Marshfield, Wis.

"One who listens to one who has a need to talk, is silent with one who has a need not to talk. One who considers the ideas, feelings, and needs of others as important as his own."
Annette Merklein, Program Advisor,*
Tacoma, Wash.

"...means...being able to free oneself long enough...to encounter another living being and experience his world and his needs, in a way that will communicate to that individual that he is the focus of another's caring."
Brigitte Bartl, Program Advisor, Reno, Nev.

5. Creates a Supportive Environment

"One who creates an atmosphere of openness and trust, who also allows for a learner to be more closed and questioning at times."
Joanne Yinger and Margot Biestman,
Responsive Education Program staff

"...Our children can expand their innate creativity without being put down."
Erthlay Witherspoon, Follow Through Program Director, Sumter, S. C.

"One who...is able to establish a climate... which frees that person to communicate his feelings and/or seek help without fear of misunderstanding or rebuff."
Frances Lashbrook, Assistant
Superintendent, Owensboro, Ky.

"...to make that person feel important and any questions they may ask are not stupid. To be able to put them at ease and bring out their pluses they may have to share with others...."
Marlene Aldrich, Community Aide,
Lebanon, N. H.

6. Helps Others in Problem Solving

"...assisting others...in clarifying their own value systems and in developing their intellectual abilities in a way that is positive and meaningful."
Wanda Willis, Program Advisor, Fresno, Calif.

A Responsive person:
- creates a supportive environment
- helps in problem solving

*A Program Advisor is a staff developer in a Follow Through Program implementing the Responsive Education Program.

"One who creates a safe but sometimes uncomfortable environment for learning."
Natividad De Anda, Responsive Education Program staff

"One who...can ask questions to help you clarify your feelings, beliefs, insights, etc...."
Mary Ruth Dodson, Follow Through Program Director, Owensboro, Ky.

A Responsive person:
- takes responsibility for own actions
- helps others take responsibility
- respects others' pacing and limits

"If I ask a question the teacher says, 'What do you think it might be?' I gotta think."
Ahlee Lewis, second grade, Berkeley, Calif.

7. Takes Responsibility for Own Actions

"The price of responsiveness is sometimes pain as one faces his own responsibility but often joy as he shares [his own and] another's accomplishments."
Jacqueline Calabreese, Teacher Assistant, Reno, Nev.

8. Helps Others Take Responsibility

"...A responsive person gives you support and aid in carrying out a plan of action you have, and can offer alternative ways of meeting your needs and the needs of those with whom you work."
Mary Ruth Dodson, Follow Through Program Director, Owensboro, Ky.

"...shares control of situations with other people--particularly planning and evaluating sessions."
Gene Berry, Program Advisor, Salt Lake City, Utah

9. Respects Others' Pacing and Limits

"...respect for and knowledge of each child's [adult's] pacing and the manner in which a child [adult] learns."
Sr. Beth Brosmer, Teacher, Buffalo, N. Y.

"Someone who tries to understand another's wants and needs and does something about it if possible. This could be as little as a hug or as much as possible."
Karen Gatena, Community Aide, Duluth, Minn.

"...reflects what he sees in another person and gives feedback back to that person as accurately as possible when requested to do so, or after checking first."
Gene Berry, Program Advisor,
Salt Lake City, Utah

10. Makes A Commitment

"One who does his work well, [is] dependable... dedicated to duties and their requirements...."
Viola Pitts, Parent Coordinator,
Sumter, South Carolina

"One who discovers what people need, and thoughtfully works with others until it is accomplished."
Francione Lewis, Responsive Education Program staff.

A "responsive" person:
- makes a commitment

"One who can contain herself though someone or others are 'pushing' or causing conflict. One who can listen to criticisms or be criticized and remain reasonable. One who does not lose her cool."
Fannie Smith, Program Advisor, Tacoma,Wash.

Notes

1. Biestman, M., Language Experience: Volume I. (Berkeley, Calif.: Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, 1970). From My Kindergarten, to be copyrighted.
2. Statement by Flora Weggeland, Program Advisor, Salt Lake City.

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# 2 RATIONALE OF THE RESPONSIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM

## Introduction

The Responsive Education Program views learners as simultaneously developing as intellectual beings, as self-perceiving beings, and as social beings. Thus it seeks to support cognitive, affective, and social growth, by working toward the goals of the development of problem-solving abilities, of healthy self-concept, and of culturally pluralistic attitudes and behaviors. These goals are intended to prepare learners to take care of their own needs in a rapidly changing society and to contribute to the solution of the pressing problems of society.

The program supports affective and social growth as well as cognitive growth.

### Productive Survival in the Face of Change

We live in a society characterized by an increasingly rapid rate of social and technological change and by a diversity of cultures. Coping productively with change and diversity requires the ability to think creatively and critically in the face of new problems, the ability to act appropriately, and knowledge of one's own values and capabilities. The social consciousness needed to achieve democratic living and social reform requires respect for other cultures and for equity.

It seeks to prepare learners to cope productively with change and diversity.

### The Role of the School

We believe that the family and community begin and have primary responsibility for a child's education, but that the school plays an important role in continuing it. The school is responsible for helping children acquire the skills and concepts they need in order to survive economically and find satisfaction, and for supporting the development of their concepts of themselves as capable learners. It is also responsible for providing equitable opportunities for all children to learn, and for helping them learn to interact democratically.

The school helps continue the education begun by family and community.

In carrying out its responsibilities, the school must promote parents' and community members' participation in identifying the survival skills needed by

their children, in making decisions about policies and programs, and in working in the classroom as teachers or volunteers.

## From "Compensatory" to "Responsive" Education

Responsive education assumes that all children have assets for learning.

The Responsive Education Program evolved as a response to the country's need to provide all children in the public school system an equal opportunity to succeed. The children who have had least favorable opportunities have been those who differ from the white middle-class majority: children of color (of ethnic-minority groups) and children from low-income groups. The "compensatory" or "remedial" approach assumes that lack of success in school is due to deficiencies or deprivation in children or their backgrounds and that education should compensate for such "deficiencies." By contrast, we believe that the principal cause of failure is the school's inability to respond to children whose values and behaviors differ from those of white middle-class children.

Our program assumes that children of all ethnic and economic groups have assets for learning that they have acquired within their families and communities. We believe that children arrive in school having already demonstrated that they can learn concepts, language, and basic rules of interacting with others. All children can learn effectively and grow psychologically if they are provided with conditions and experiences that enable them to use what they already know to learn new skills and concepts.

Teachers must seek to respond sensitively and appropriately to the needs and experience of all children.

Teachers must seek to respond appropriately to the needs and experience of all children and provide a classroom environment and materials that are familiar to and accepting of all children. Teachers who have children from many different backgrounds in their classrooms cannot be expected to be familiar with the backgrounds of all the children; however, they are expected to learn enough about the children to recognize their strengths and their styles of functioning in the classroom. The school is expected to provide some teachers or other staff members who are familiar with the backgrounds of the children.

## The Theory and Values Underlying this Approach

In the following section of this chapter, we describe the theoretical foundations of the program. In the final section, we discuss the values underlying the program, its goals and principles, and the capabilities and attitudes it proposes to foster.

## I. Theoretical Foundations

The theoretical foundations of the program come from the work of developmental psychologists such as Piaget; educators such as Bruner and Ausubel; psychologists and sociologists such as Carnoy, Gordon, Freire, and Moore and Anderson; and education philosophers such as Dewey.*

The theorists from these diverse fields share a humanistic view of people as rational, self-regulating, and self-motivating beings and a view of learning as a process in which individuals use previous experience and knowledge to formulate concepts or behaviors that are personally meaningful. They differ from those who view learners as organisms whose behaviors result principally from conditioning.

The program is based on humanistic theories.

We can state the contributions of these humanistic theorists in terms of what we believe to be true about people and what we believe to be true about learning.

### What We Believe To Be True about People

Bruner tells us that we seek to know and control ourselves and our environment. Jung points out our desire to become conscious of what is important within us and outside of us. The natural inclination of a toddler to handle, to look at, to listen, and to explore expresses this basic drive to become familiar with and master our environment.

We strive to master our environment.

In agreement with Maslow, we believe that we seek growth. We seek to provide for our basic needs (e.g., food, shelter); we seek to protect ourselves; and we seek the pleasure of creativity.

We seek growth.

Rogers helps us acknowledge that we are social beings. We seek to be with others and maintain positive relationships with them. We need to interact with others to affirm our beliefs and ideas and to gain enjoyment and pleasure.

We are social beings.

We each have different ways of thinking and achieving our goals. Our values and learned ways of doing things make up our individuality. We acquire some values through culture and conditioning and some through rational thought.

Our values and ways of doing things make up our individuality.

*Bibliographical references can be found at the end of the chapter.

We are self-perceiving beings.

Sagan points out that in any interaction or activity, we can be participants or observers. We are both doers and observers of what we do. As self-perceiving beings, we form our self-concepts from our observations and judgments about ourselves. We agree with Mead that our cultural heritage and ethnic identification strongly influence our perceptions, values, behavior, and self-concepts.

## What We Believe To Be True about Learning

Learning is determined by maturation and interaction with materials and others.

We have unique ways of perceiving and interpreting what we experience.

From Piaget's work, we know that learning is determined by an individual's maturation and interaction with materials and with others. Both physical readiness and practice are required for learning new concepts or new behavior. We use our individual ways of thinking (cognitive structures) to understand what we experience and to acquire new concepts. We have unique ways of perceiving and interpreting what we experience. New content is most meaningfully learned when we apply what we already know to the material.

We use our previous experience to understand new experience.

From common sense and from the writings of Dewey, we know that our previous experience forms a fund of knowledge that we use to understand new experience. We learn by developing new ideas from familiar content or applying familiar ideas to new content.

We learn by abstracting from experience.

We learn by abstracting from our experience. Piaget defines stages in the growth of our ability to think abstractly. E.g., children learn mathematical concepts at first by manipulating objects such as coins or blocks. Later in their development they can manipulate written mathematical symbols.

We learn by seeing the results of our actions.

We learn by seeing the results of our actions (getting feedback). Moore and Anderson further state that seeking knowledge is seeking answers to questions. Without feedback, without results or answers to questions, there is no increase in knowledge.

We need to have some control over our learning.

In agreement with both Dewey and Anderson, we believe that we need to be responsible for our own learning, to have some control over what and how we learn. We are self-regulating beings. We need to adjust how much information we get, how much we practice new skills and behaviors, and how and to what ends we apply knowledge.

In conjunction with our belief in self-regulation and in agreement with Dewey, Rogers, de Charms, and Moore and Anderson, we believe that the greatest

reward a person can experience is internal. Others can tell us how well we have done, but unless our own observations bring us to believe in our accomplishment, we will not feel good about it. Gratification of the desire to know, to satisfy curiosity, or to conquer a problem is an important source of motivation for learning.

Internal satisfaction is the greatest reward a person can experience

Moore and Anderson tell us that our values determine our motivation. Since we each have different values, different goals motivate us. Some of us seek academic achievement because we value it; others do not. Some of us seek being with large groups of people; others do not. Some of us like reading; others do not. We are willing to exert the effort to learn only if the result is of value to us.

We may be motivated by different goals.

From Piaget's concept of adaptation and Festinger's dissonance theory, we know that we seek harmony in understanding and perception. We are sensitive to ideas and behaviors that conflict with our understandings and perceptions. We acquire new concepts to understand circumstances that do not make sense to us.

We seek to resolve dissonance.

Learning serves to satisfy curiosity and provide for our security and creative needs. In agreement with Bruner and Adler, we believe that we seek not only to comprehend things, but also to master circumstances for our benefit.

We learn in order to comprehend and to master circumstances.

## II. Values Underlying the Program's Teaching/Learning Structure and Process

Our beliefs lead us to certain values:

Because we believe that we are thinking, rational beings, we value intellectual development.

Because we believe we seek to know and control our environment, by providing for our basic needs, protecting ourselves, and seeking creativity, we value the development of problem-solving processes and abilities.

Because we believe that every individual has a sense of self that he or she wishes to preserve and enhance, we value supporting and enhancing each person's individuality and sense of worth.

Because we believe that we want to live with others, we value equity and pluralistic perspectives in community living.

The program values
- intellectual development
- supporting each person's individuality
- equity and pluralistic perspectives
- each individual's way of thinking and learning.

Because we believe that our previous experience and knowledge are assets for new learning, we value each individual's way of thinking and learning.

Because we believe that we strive to control our own lives by being responsible for our own decisions, we value autonomy and the right to our personal values.

The program also values
- autonomy and the right to personal values
- learning based on what is familiar and meaningful.

Because we believe that learning must help individuals expand their present understanding and competence in providing for themselves, we value learning based on what is familiar and meaningful to each individual.

## Goals and Principles

These values underlie the goals and principles of the program.* The goals of the program are:

1. To support cognitive growth by promoting the development of problem-solving abilities.
2. To support affective growth by fostering the development of healthy self-concept.
3. To support social growth by promoting the development of culturally pluralistic attitudes and behaviors.

The goals of the program are to promote the development of problem-solving abilities, of healthy self-concept, and of cultural pluralism.

It is important to note that these goals complement and contribute to each other. They are not developed separately. A healthy self-concept fosters the confidence needed to tackle and solve problems; the ability to take pluralistic perspectives expands a person's ability to solve problems. A person needs to become intellectually discerning and able to reason in order to form an accurate self-image and to know his or her values and preferences. A person needs both intellectual clarity and knowledge of his or her identity in order to recognize how others are similar or different, to perceive prejudice and injustice, and to work toward equity and cultural pluralism in society.

The three goals complement and contribute to each other.

*For detailed discussions of the goals and principles, see Chapter 3, "Cognitive Development in the Responsive Education Program"; Chapter 4, "Healthy Self-Concept in the Responsive Education Program"; Chapter 5, "Cultural Pluralism in the Responsive Education Program "; and Chapter 7, "Principles and Teaching Guidelines of the Responsive Education Program."

Four general principles guide the formulation of the teaching structure and process that helps children develop toward these goals.

1. The learners' experience, background, and interests are assets.
2. Learners develop increasing responsibility for and control of their own learning.
3. Learners acquire skills and concepts in the context of meaningful, integrated learning experiences.
4. Learners share knowledge and experience and interact on issues.

Four principles guide the structure and process of Responsive teaching.

These principles guide the teacher in setting up the environment, planning activities, and interacting with children.

## Capabilities and Attitudes This Program Proposes to Foster

If the program is properly implemented, we would hope that children who have experienced this kind of education would be moving toward the achievement of particular capabilities and attitudes that can be described as intellectual, self-accepting, and culturally pluralistic. We describe these features of character and aspects of personal effectiveness below. The descriptions are drawn from statements made by educators and personality theorists[1] and represent long-range ideals toward which we strive rather than immediately attainable objectives. We believe that individuals possessing some of these characteristics would be better prepared to be self-determining, self-aware, and contributing members of society.

The program poses to foster capabilities that prepare children to be self-aware, self-determining problem-solvers and contributing members of society.

Individuals who have developed their intellectual abilities tend to take initiative in addressing issues and problems and can see facts realistically, apply concepts, and draw conclusions to make judgments. They approach new ideas with excitement and are aware of and interested in many things. While they enjoy subjects that call for imagination and fantasy, they also are very realistic, particularly in dealing with everyday problems. They rely on their own conclusions but are willing to hear reasonable opinions from others.

They apply their perceptions and understanding to themselves and their relationships with others. They can be relied on to attempt to settle interpersonal arguments or problems with reason. They are willing to listen to and try to understand the other person's point of view in discussions or disputes.

Individuals who posess healthy self-concepts enjoy feeling alive and enjoy the common experiences of everyday life. While they express their feelings readily they are also careful to avoid offending others with inappropriate reactions. They are aware of their personal strengths of character but rarely make a point of letting others know about them. They are clear about their limitations and are not hypersensitive about them. They can take constructive criticism without reacting unduly defensively.

They are aware of their values--cultural, family, and personal--but would not impose them on others or expect everyone to acknowledge them. They simply use their values matter-of-factly.

They enjoy working by themselves on projects that are personal to them but also enjoy working with others on matters of common interest. When working with others, they are capable of leading and of following. They value the ideas and efforts of others and give credit to others when they have earned it.

They give themselves credit as well and are appropriately expressive in celebrating their successes or accomplishments. They most often acknowledge their accomplishments to themselves or to personal friends.

They believe in their opinions and values and are not likely to assume another point of view until they are convinced that it seems reasonable. They will defend themselves from being demeaned and will assert themselves in support of others with whose values they agree. They are sensitive to the feelings of others and willing to help them take care of themselves.

Individuals who value equity and pluralistic perspectives believe in equal opportunity and equal rights for themselves and others. They want to improve aspects of their own lives and of the lives of others, and they support and work for social reform. They can be relied upon to speak out on concerns and

to support efforts to defend and uphold what they believe in.

While they value improvement, they are also realistic and are willing to compromise when it is advantageous. They are capable of using strategies that are appropriate for effecting productive change.

In their personal relations with others, they value give and take. They take responsibility for the quality of their relationships and hold others responsible for their part as well.

While they like and contribute to their own group, they view cultural differences as assets that add to the quality of life. They believe in each person's and group's right to co-exist as long as the person or group does not impinge on or attempt to injure the survival or lifestyles of others.

Notes

1. The descriptions are drawn from views expressed in the works of Erikson, Kelley, Maslow, Rogers, and Sagan; from views offered by members of the Responsive Education Program staff; and from views offered by the following school staff members participating in the program: Vivian Barrett, Parent Coordinator, Marshfield, Wis.; Brigitte Bartl, Program Advisor, Reno Nev.; Gene Berry, Program Advisor, Salt Lake City, Utah; Nancy Clanton, Follow Through Program Director, Marshfield, Wis.; David Crow, Follow Through Coordinator, Fresno, Calif.; Evelyn Forbes, Teacher, Fresno, Calif.; Eardine Lee, Program Advisor, Cleveland, Ohio; Irneese Murphy, Program Advisor, Fresno, Calif.; Joy Shahzade, Teacher, Fresno, Calif.; Karl Silvester, School Psychologist, Salt Lake City, Utah; Rose Lee Stepney, PAC Chairperson, St. Louis, Mo.; and Wanda Willis, Program Advisor, Fresno, Calif.

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# 3 COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT IN THE RESPONSIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM

## Introduction

The Responsive Education Program seeks to support cognitive growth by using a process that will guide individuals to be able to resolve issues or problems in need of solution, to think creatively and critically while finding solutions, and to act in accordance with the maximum information obtainable. We believe that these abilities will help learners meet their own needs and the needs of others in a rapidly changing and diverse society.

The program supports the development of problem-solving abilities.

We believe that learners actively construct their own knowledge rather than passively receiving it. This view of learning, which we discuss in the following section of this chapter, leads us to use learners' own questions, interests, and needs as the basis for learning experiences and to help them toward self-guidance and independence in their learning. We encourage transfering information beyond the context of the learning experience in which it is originally acquired to a variety of uses in the children's day-to-day experiences. We approach academic skills (e.g., reading, writing, computing) as important tools for effective problem solving rather than as ends in themselves, and we believe they are best acquired in the context of meaningful learning experiences that present or simulate real-life situations.*

Academic skills are tools for problem solving, acquired in the context of meaningful learning experiences.

The theoretical basis for our approach comes from a variety of sources. Jean Piaget's work in developmental psychology provides much of the basis for our definition of cognition, our view of the factors that produce cognitive growth and of the way children perceive reality. It is important to note, however, that there have been differing views on the way Piaget's theories apply to education. The view presented here should be regarded as the Responsive Education Program's interpretation of these and other theories, developed in the context of the program's

*Chapter 8, "Language and Reading in the Responsive Education Program," describes the Responsive approach to academic skills in a content area.

broader goals of supporting effective problem solving, healthy self-concept, and cultural pluralism.

The work of John Dewey, Jerome Bruner, and William Rowher supports our notion of the importance of learning by doing and applying knowledge to new contexts. The theories of O. K. Moore and Alan Anderson contribute to our emphasis on providing learners with feedback and enabling them to develop control over their own learning. Many other theorists who advocate activity-based, meaningful learning experiences for young children can be found to be in agreement with Responsive practices, although not always on the basis of the same reasons.

Part I of this chapter discusses our view of cognition and cognitive development. Part II extends our discussion of the application of this view by describing adult roles and learner activities in classrooms that implement this approach.

## I. Cognition and Cognitive Growth

### A Definition of Cognition

We view cognition as the active construction of new knowledge.

In the view of cognition or learning that we support, cognition can be defined as the active construction of new knowledge (of concepts or of abilities). It can be contrasted with recognition, which is the recalling of previously constructed knowledge. Recognition is more passive because retrieving that which has been previously understood requires less mental energy.

The active construction of new knowledge consists of the processes of assimilation and accommodation, which occur at the same time. These processes can be described as follows:

As the mind receives information through the senses (e.g., hearing, touch), it runs the data through its existing thought structures. The mind most readily selects information that is familiar because it fits previous perceptions and ways of thinking. This process is called assimilation. Information that is understood and can be used has been assimilated.

The mind holds information that can not be related to past understandings or behaviors, and works actively to assimilate it. It does so by associating attributes of previously held concepts or processes

with attributes of the new information, stretching past experiences, and creating, building, or bending itself to develop new structures. This latter process is called accommodation.

Cognition results from the assimilation of information and the accommodation of thought structures.

Thus, instead of passively receiving knowledge, as a computer is programmed to do, the learner actively builds his own knowledge as he interacts with the new data and previously held or previously assimilated information. These processes constitute cognition.

How Cognition Develops

Cognitive growth, in this view, is a series of adaptations by which the mind becomes increasingly complex and logical. Four factors operate simultaneously to make growth gradual, orderly, and natural. By recognizing and capitalizing on these factors, our program seeks to work with the mind's natural tendency to grow.

The four factors that bring about cognitive growth are:

- physical maturation
- experience in physical and mental actions
- social interaction and transmission
- the mind's tendency to regulate itself.

We summarize these factors as follows:

1) The first is physical maturation, particularly the maturation of the nervous and endocrine systems. The exact relationship between organic growth and intellectual development is unknown, but it is obvious that physical maturation is necessary for cognitive development. Maturation alone will not bring about intellectual growth, however; cognitive structures must also be exercised by experience in the physical and social environment.

Because adequate nutrition and health care support physical maturation, the Responsive Education Program puts considerable emphasis on comprehensive services. Information about physical maturation provides teachers with additional clues with which to account for and anticipate the behavior and needs of learners. For example, poor eyesight may affect the development of reading ability; impaired hearing may affect a child's ability to follow directions.

2) Second, children learn from experience in performing physical and mental actions. An infant's actions are largely physical, but as a child becomes able to think symbolically, mental actions predominate. For example, a young child may repeatedly drop an object to see whether the action continues to produce the same result. An older child may repeatedly manipulate words and sounds she delights in to achieve the same or different effects.

This factor suggests that the teacher provide opportunities for children to test and strengthen their developing abilities by exploring objects and events first-hand, and allow them to repeat similar experiences as often as necessary to gain understanding and confidence. These experiences may be modified in various ways so that repetition comes as a new experience each time.

3) Third, children learn from social interaction. Children learn from the social environment as well as from experience with physical objects. Interaction with others allows children to test and challenge ideas and to gain other points of view and ways of doing things. The satisfaction of expressing and communicating new ideas provides a reward for learning.

To take advantage of the social interaction factor, a teacher can provide opportunities for children to express, share, and evaluate their experience in language and other media in ways that are natural and comfortable.

*Interaction is an important factor in learning.*

4) The fourth factor is self-regulation, or the mind's tendency to strive to resolve dissonance and achieve a more consistent organization. When the information received seems to be in conflict with existing ways of thinking, the mind will use the adaptive processes to reach a new level of logical thought.

This factor indicates teachers should be aware that meaningful learning comes from the learners' own questions and needs. Teachers can help children express questions, explore, and choose answers, recognizing that children will learn more from the process of finding a solution than from arriving at a single "right" answer. By supporting children in the expression and resolution of their questions, teachers help children develop an expectation of encountering and resolving dissonance, and confidence in their ability to do so. The amount and kind of support a teacher offers a child will depend on the child's previous learning environment and degree of initiative. For example, a child unaccustomed to adult confidence in his independent use of materials may need more guidance than a child accustomed to such trust from adults.

Stages of Mental Development

These four factors cause an individual's cognitive abilities to develop gradually from the instinctive reflex actions of the newborn infant to the abstract, logical reasoning of the adult, which a child achieves at the age of 15 or 16. Piaget has classified this development into major periods, each characterized by the kind of mental actions the learner can produce and coordinate in the form of outcomes or products. Until the end of the final period, that of the young adult, learners think differently and perceive reality differently from adults. Thus a teacher needs to think of a child not as a miniature adult or a less knowledgeable person, but as someone with a different view of reality and a different form of intelligence.

Young children think differently and perceive reality differently from adults.

We believe that an awareness of the characteristics of young children's thinking, plus a system of direct observation of individual children's behavior, can help a teacher plan and implement the most appropriate learning experiences for individual children. We will therefore briefly describe some of the characteristics of the thinking of children between the ages of five and nine (i.e., the ages of children currently participating in the Responsive Education Program).

An awareness of the characteristics of young children's thinking can help a teacher plan appropriate learning and assessment experiences.

Before discussing the characteristics, we note three points about the application of this view of development to education:

1) The stages of development always unfold in the same order since each builds on the knowledge and

reasoning abilities of the previous stage. It would therefore be unrealistic to expect children to acquire or use the reasoning abilities of a given stage until they have developed and exercised the abilities of the previous stage.

2) These stages seem to occur at approximately the same ages in all children of a variety of cultures studied to date. The general characteristics, then, would probably apply to the mental processes of a given group of children, although the children may differ in their learning styles, interests, and real-world use of knowledge gained. (The characteristics cannot be rigidly assigned or applied to all individuals in an age group, however.)

3) It does not seem to be possible or desirable to accelerate development of the stages. This point has been the subject of some debate in American education. Some educators have interpreted Piaget's theories to mean that children should be taught the reasoning abilities that characterize different stages. We agree with those who do not make unrealistic attempts to accelerate development.

The Responsive Education Program emphasizes the value of time--providing all learners sufficient time to process and synthesize experiences--instead of valuing speed in an "if it's faster, it's better" mode.

## Characteristics of Young Children's Thinking

By the age of entering primary school, children have passed through an earlier stage of responding at a reflex level to the objects and persons in their world. They have reached a stage of being able to coordinate information taken in by the senses in such a way that they can act deliberately upon it.

Young primary-school children see the world only from their own point of view.

After acquiring some idea of the features and predictable responses of the world around them, children begin to think symbolically--attaching language to behavior, imitating actions, and performing other symbolic behaviors such as drawing. They see the world only from their own point of view, however. For example, children at this stage draw objects placed in front of them as the objects appear from that angle only. They are also unable to project to other points of view in their interactions with others.

In working with children at this stage, teachers can facilitate the development of symbolic representation by providing opportunities for expression

through language, art, movement, and dramatic play. They can accept and work with the fact that children see the world only from their individual points of view by offering opportunities in which children may personalize an experience for themselves. In helping children recognize the need for cooperation and rules, teachers can show the natural consequences of acts instead of attempting to appeal to the logic of reciprocity. As the children begin to express their intuitions about the way the world operates, teachers should not expect analytic statements. Instead, they can support the application of past situations or ways of acting to new situations.

Later in the primary-school years, children gain the ability to take different perspectives and to organize their thoughts into more logical systems. They can now perform mental operations on objects and events that have been experienced directly, although they are still unable to think abstractly. Teachers can support learning at this stage by offering many concrete experiences, with much opportunity for comparing and modifying conclusions, based on new and elaborated information.

Older primary-school children can take different perspectives and think more logically, but they have not fully achieved the adult ability to think abstractly.

Not until the age of approximately 15 or 16, do individuals fully achieve the adult ability to reason abstractly (e.g., to manipulate verbal propositions, to hypothesize contrary-to-fact situations, to construct ideals). Instruction based on demand for such thinking places unrealistic expectations on young children.* To support the development of increasing confidence and competence on the part of learners, the tasks and expectations of performance must be in keeping with the actual competence of learners.

They learn best from concrete experience.

## Fostering the Development of Intellectual Abilities in a Responsive Classroom

Educators and psychologists of different schools of thought have produced various descriptions of the elements or aspects of the process of learning.

*We note that young children may be able to acquire abstract facts or skills by rote, in order to please a teacher or to gain external rewards, but we believe that they will not be well prepared to apply the concept to other situations in a flexible problem-solving fashion. We therefore advocate providing concrete, meaningful learning experiences, and drawing on children's natural motivation.

Educators and psychologists have produced various descriptions of the elements of learning.

Although it may be somewhat artificial or misleading to identify separate elements of learning, we think that arriving at a set of terms is important, if only because classroom teachers need some concrete notion of what they are helping to promote.

Several existing descriptions rely on a definition of learning whereby the learner 1) "receives" information to operate at a factual or knowledge level; 2) interprets information to operate at an analysis or synthesis level; and 3) generalizes, transfers, and uses information at an application level. We would modify such descriptions by stating that even at the first level, information is not directly translated. Rather than beginning at a factual level, we would begin with the facts as the learner perceives them.

In our view, the significant aspects of learning are perceiving, integrating, and applying.

Thus we would prefer to describe the significant aspects of the learning process as: 1) perceiving; 2) integrating; and 3) applying.

Perceiving is the learner's use of senses and past experience to assimilate information.

1) Perceiving consists of the learner's use of senses and past experience to assimilate information.

For example, two learners observe a kite being launched. One, who is unfamiliar with kites and aerodynamics, "sees" a brightly colored fabric with several tail pieces, a person raising his arms to launch it, and a lovely fluttering sight in the sky. The second "sees" a wisely constructed, innovatively shaped wood and nylon object and a technique that gets the kite airborne more quickly than the technique the learner has previously used.

Integrating is finding personal meaning in an experience.

2) Integrating consists of finding personal meaning in an experience.

For example, the first learner takes a pleasant sense of color from the experience of watching the kite and a feeling of magic related to the flying of the kite. The second learner appreciates the thought and expertise that went into this project and sees how it is similar to what he has done, but has some innovations.

Applying is making use of the information.

3) Applying refers to the use the learner makes of this information.

For example, the first learner reflects this experience in subsequent art work. The drawings or paintings picture kites that represent the learner's

interpretation of the kite recently seen. The second learner actually makes a new kite, using ideas he remembered and understood from the other kite.

These three elements may occur simultaneously or so rapidly that it is impossible to separate them, or they may occur over such a wide span of time that it is not readily apparent that they are related. Integration or application may sometimes take place weeks or months after the information was originally perceived. Individuals may differ in the ways they perceive, integrate, and apply, and they may prefer different ways in different situations. For instance, some learners may prefer to integrate a particular experience by talking about it; others by writing about it or expressing themselves artistically; others by reflecting alone; and others by listening and quietly relating their own thoughts to those of others.

Individuals may differ in the ways they perceive, integrate, and apply.

Our program emphasizes providing support and opportunities for all three elements to take place. We respect each learner's way of perceiving, integrating, and applying. Because we value pluralistic perspectives, we also seek to enable learners to expand their repertoire of options to new ways that they find useful or rewarding.

The program seeks to support learners in their own ways of perceiving, integrating, and applying, and help them acquire other useful or rewarding ways.

Perceiving, integrating, and applying can be seen in operation in problem-solving behaviors. We believe that most learning experiences can be regarded as problem-solving experiences--i.e., experiences in which learners seek answers to questions or issues in need of resolutions. Such problem-solving experiences could be extensive projects, such as carrying out an electricity experiment, or immediate, spur-of-the-moment questions, such as deciding what to do if one has lost one's milk money. They could be intellectual, affective, or interpersonal. We find it useful to think of learning experiences in this way because we consider the process of learning as important as the content, and think that skills and concepts are best acquired in the context of solving meaningful problems. Our view of learning, as the active construction of one's own knowledge, leads us to strive to help learners formulate and solve their own problems.

Learning experiences can be regarded as problem-solving experiences.

Skills and concepts are best acquired in the context of meaningful problem-solving experiences.

We believe that support for perception, integration, and application will help children gain increasing independence and confidence in:

Support for perception, integration, and application fosters independence and confidence in problem solving.

1. Recognizing and formulating their own questions or problems.

2. Gathering relevant information and experience, incorporating the information and experience into prior knowledge, and generating and evaluating ideas.

3. Using the knowledge in relevant situations.

In our view, an environment that supports a problem-solving approach to the acquisition of skills and concepts would contain adults who know the learners and interact with them in supportive ways; materials of high interest and relevance to the learners; tasks and materials of an open-ended nature with no single correct response; non-threatening but challenging situations; and opportunities for interaction among learners. Academic skills would be acquired in the context of such activities, and used to solve meaningful problems.

We can identify particular behaviors that we hope will result in learners whose development has been supported in this way. These behaviors form the learner objectives for the program's goal of supporting cognitive growth. The objectives are that learners:

Three learner objectives describe behaviors that we hope will result from support of cognitive growth.

1. Take initiative in formulating and addressing questions or problems in need of resolution.

2. Use problem-solving processes to acquire academic skills, and use these skills and other abilities to gather information, generate ideas, and evaluate ideas for effective and appropriate solutions.

3. Act to solve problems effectively and appropriately.

Motivation and Purpose

The learner's motivation for a particular experience and the purpose can affect the outcome.

To complete our discussion, we must also consider the role of the learner's motivation in a particular project and the purpose of the learning experience. These two factors can exert considerable influence on the outcome.

A learner's motivation to participate, take risks, and respond in a learning experience may be affected by the learner's concept of himself as a learner in general and as a learner of the particular skills or topic. It may also be affected by the learner's perception of himself in relation to the topic, the leader, and other learners.

*When children ask their own questions they are more likely to discover effective solutions.*

In addition, the purpose of a learning experience affects its design and the learner's involvement. The quality and depth of involvement produced by a project whose purpose is to fulfill a major challenge of an individual or group will be different from that produced by a task that is one minor step in an extensive project.

These comments serve to suggest that there is no simple way to explain or predict the phenomenon of learning. The learner may have acquired many effective means of perception, integration and application, but the purpose of a project and the learner's level of motivation can significantly affect the outcome. These factors and variables related to the characteristics of the individual learner must always be considered.

Since our definition of learning places the learner in the central role, we believe that the most productive, stimulating learning experiences will be those in which the learners participate in establishing the purpose and expectations and receive immediate, relevant feedback upon which to plan further action. This approach puts the learner or learners in control of the experience, so that lack of motivation, inappropriate pacing, and overdirection are not dangers. Learners assume control gradually, however, as teachers observe them to be ready to accept and welcome these responsibilities.

Learning is most productive if learners assume control over their own learning, to the extent they are ready to do so.

## II. Classroom Application

The program focuses on helping teachers provide learning opportunities that are supportive of the learners' past experience.

In this section, we describe what would be happening in primary-grade classrooms in which our program's approach to cognitive development is being implemented. The main focus will be upon the teacher or any adult leader in the classroom and ways of helping teachers provide learning opportunities we believe to be supportive of the learners' past experience.

### Adult Roles

What teacher behaviors are commensurate with this definition of learning? How is cognitive growth fostered in a conscious, deliberately continuous manner? Where educators are dedicated to enabling learners to use their experience, present abilities, interests, and backgrounds in constructing their own new knowledge, the classroom adults will probably be carrying out the following roles:

The adult behaviors that support cognitive development are:
- modeling the inquiring mind
- gaining and using pertinent information
- provisioning the environment
- interacting with learners.

1. Modeling the inquiring mind.
2. Gaining and using pertinent information about the learners.
3. Provisioning an interesting and meaningful environment.
4. Interacting with learners to stimulate independent thought and problem-solving behaviors.

### 1. Modeling the Inquiring Mind

By modeling problem-solving behaviors, teachers provide children with first-hand evidence that autonomy and wise decision making are possible.

The teachers' own actions are an important source of learning for the child. If teachers face classroom issues with the same constructive, confident, solution-seeking attitudes they seek to promote in children, the children have frequent first-hand evidence that autonomy and wise decision making are realistic expectations, not theoretical ideals. There are numerous opportunities for adults to demonstrate problem-solving behaviors spontaneously--e.g., a window shade or door latch sticks; a large dog invades the classroom; there is Monday morning evidence of vandalism.

This modeling will take many forms, but in general, the adults will model behaviors similar to the following:

1. Clarifying the goal, focus, question, issue ("What do I want to find out?").

2. Bringing past knowledge, experience, abilities to bear ("What do I already know?") and creating ideas through experience and actions ("What are some things I might do?").

3. Synthesizing the new with the old ("How is that the same as or different from what I did before?") while critically evaluating ideas and actions ("What will work?" "Which is better?").

4. Using the new information in other situations ("When I have dinner this evening, I might see whether...").

As an important part of their own acquiring and making a habit of such behaviors and expectations, children need to see that the process works for the adults in their lives. They need to see two persons solve one situation in two different ways, both successfully. They need to see adults make mistakes and unsuccessful attempts and then try again. Since children of this age should not be expected to understand abstractions apart from concrete experience, they will gain understanding far better by seeing such behaviors in situations around them than by hearing about them.

2. Gaining and Using Pertinent Information about the Learner

To support learning as described in our definition, adults need to observe and respond to the learners' experience, present abilities, needs, and background. Responding appropriately requires not only a general knowledge of and previous experience with children of this age, but also a continuous accumulation of specific information about the individual children and their ethnic and cultural groups. Adults will need to:

1. Become acquainted with the neighborhood setting (tour residential and business areas).

2. See children in their home environments (make home visits, with prior arrangements).

3. Note the way children perceive reality (observe their ways of expressing perceptions and their ways of applying knowledge).

4. Learn how individuals relate to each other and how they handle problems, both alone and with others (watch, listen to and keep anecdotal records of children's expression [verbal and non-verbal] and performance levels [ranging from concrete to abstract] in a wide variety of indoor and outdoor activities.

5. Discover how children respond to success, failure, frustration (observe and keep anecdotal records of specific incidents).

6. Learn what resources the children presently use (observe and record which materials, other learners, or adults they turn to, for what purpose, how often).

Since generalizations made on the basis of a single incident are often inaccurate, adults should make continued observations, within the limitations of their time and energy. It is also useful to have more than one perspective. If the classroom contains two adults, they should both make observations. Parents' observations should also be sought.

Careful, continued observation of the learners helps teachers provide appropriate, meaningful experiences.

On the basis of regular observations and daily interactions with the children, adults can learn about the children's abilities and interests and help them to pursue individual and group projects in which a wide range of learning and practice of skills can take place. For example, a group of children interested in wood working can enjoy many profitable hours:

- measuring
- discovering balance points
- reading charts on hard and soft woods
- waiting turns for tools
- estimating sizes of woods, nails
- reading directions
- seeing reasons for safety rules
- being unsuccessful sometimes
- discovering cause and effect
- accomplishing a task.

The skills adults wish children to obtain can evolve naturally within meaningful contexts for children, when adults respond to the children's interests and abilities.

### 3. Provisioning the Learning Environment

In the Responsive Education Program, adults are not considered the sole providers of the learning environment, especially after children gain confidence and independence in creating and helping to change aspects of their surroundings. We use the term "provisioning" advisedly, to suggest "paving the way toward" rather than "providing." Adults may initially set up basic conditions and materials, to be modified as needed. It may be possible, however, to involve some children of this age in creating many aspects of their environment, beginning with a relatively bare space and helping them create an environment to suit activities dictated by their present interests and abilities.

Adults and children both participate in setting up conditions and materials of the environment.

### 4. Interacting with Learners to Stimulate Independent Thought and Problem-Solving Behaviors

Adults' interactions with learners, both verbal and non-verbal, are an important part of the support and opportunities available to students for constructing their own knowledge. Supportive behaviors will probably include:

1. Asking open-ended, thought-provoking questions. E.g., "How else might this story have ended?"

2. Supporting student thought and action with "because" statements. E.g., "That was an excellent guess because it makes sense with all of the words so far."

3. Helping students discover and use various resources (both materials and other learners and teachers). E.g., "What other materials might you try to make that from?" "Both Maria and Tony speak Spanish, so you might ask them if they'd be willing to help you with that song."

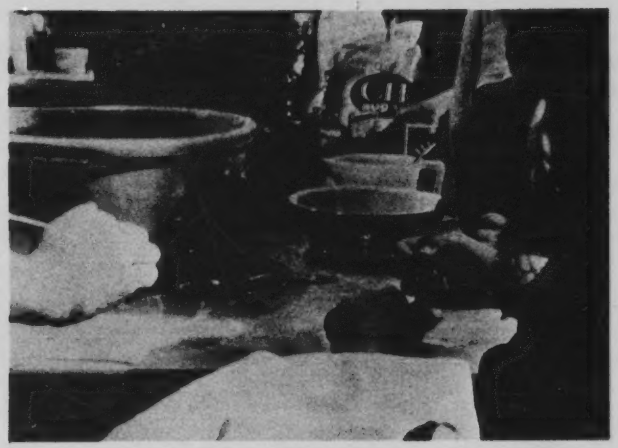
4. Encouraging child-initiated statements and questions by
   - listening attentively
   - responding to children's statements with related questions and comments.

Adults stimulate independent thought and problem-solving behaviors by asking thought-provoking questions, supporting steps in problem solving, helping students discover resources, and encouraging children's statements and questions.

## Learner Activities

Learners' abilities to perceive, integrate and apply are fostered through a variety of meaningful problem-solving experiences.

The learners' abilities to perceive, integrate, and apply information are fostered primarily through a wide range of problem-solving experiences. These experiences vary from short- to long-term and from individual to small- and large-group. Based on the interests and real-world needs of the learners, the projects or topics will usually involve a combination of academic skills. For example, a study of kite-making may require mathematics skills (measuring, calculating), research skills (locating references, interviewing, observing) and language skills (speaking, listening, reading, writing) as well as craft and design skills. This approach is sometimes termed an interdisciplinary approach or an integrated curriculum.



*Skills are learned not for their own sake, but for use in life's activities.*

The learner activities support taking risks, making predictions, being open to evidence, and reaching resolution.

Depending on the particular activity and on the children participating, activities will vary in structure, skills involved, time spent, and direction offered. In general, however, learner activities will be such that:

1. Risk taking will be nonthreatening.

2. Making reasonable predictions will be a natural consequence of the projects and information available.

3. Being open to evidence is necessary and reinforced.

4. The time, space, and support provided are sufficient to foster the diligence needed to reach resolution.

Adults are involved directly in the children's investigative activities to the degree that they determine they are needed for support, interaction, or reinforcement. While adults strive to promote increasing independence on the part of learners, they acknowledge individual differences in this regard and adapt expectations accordingly.

Adults strive to promote independent learning, but provide help to the degree that it is needed.

They assess learners on the basis of: a) in what variety of ways, and b) to what degree of effectiveness the learners:

1. Recognize and formulate their own questions.

2. Recall and collect relevant information, acquire additional experiences, and generate and evaluate ideas and actions.

3. Apply the results.

Learners are assessed on the basis of their ability to solve problems effectively.

Through this approach, as we stated at the beginning of this chapter, we are seeking to aid children in becoming capable of generating ideas creatively, evaluating them critically, and acting upon them to improve their lives and the lives of others.

Conclusion

This position on fostering cognitive growth attempts to bring together a valuing of the individual and a learner-centered definition of cognition. In this view, the process is as important as the content, and both are determined by what is believed to serve the learner best.

Our intent might be expressed by the following statement by Piaget[1]:

> "The principal goal of education is to create [people] who are capable of doing new things, not simply of repeating what other generations have done--[people] who are creative, inventive, and discoverers.
>
> "The second goal of education is to form minds that can be critical, can verify, and not accept everything they are offered. The great danger today is of slogans, collective opinions, ready-made trends

of thought. We have to be able to resist individually, to criticize, to distinguish between what is proven and what is not.

"So we need pupils who are active, who learn early to find out by themselves, partly by their own spontaneous activity and partly through material we set up for them; who learn early to tell what is verifiable and what is simply the first idea to come to them."

The Responsive Education Program represents an endeavor to support learners in the pursuit of these two goals.

Note

1. R. Ripple and V. Rockcastle, eds., Piaget Rediscovered: A Report of the Conference on Cognitive Studies and Curriculum Development (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University School of Education, 1964), p. 5.

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# 4 HEALTHY SELF-CONCEPT IN THE RESPONSIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM

## Introduction

*Poem from an English Class**

*He always.*
*He always wanted to explain things.*
*But no one cared.*
*So he drew.*
*Sometimes he would draw and it wasn't anything.*
*He wanted to carve it in a stone or write it in the sky.*
*And it would be only the sky and him and the things inside him that needed saying.*
*And it was after that he drew the picture.*
*He kept it under his pillow and let no one see it.*
*And he would look at it every night and think about it.*
*And when it was dark and his eyes were closed, he could still see it.*
*And it was all of him.*
*And he loved it.*
*When he went to school he brought it with him like a friend.*
*It was funny about school.*
*He sat in a square brown desk.*
*Like all the other square brown desks.*
*And he thought it should be red.*
*And his room was a square brown room, like all the other rooms.*
*And it was tight and close.*
*And stiff.*
*He hated to hold the pencil and chalk, with his arms stiff and his feet flat on the floor.*
*STIFF.*

*This poem was written by a twelfth-grade student and given to the student's English teacher. Two weeks later, the student committed suicide. The poem was published in the December, 1971 issue of Liberation and is reprinted by permission.



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*With the teacher watching and watching.*
*The teacher came and spoke to him*
*She told him to wear a tie like all the other boys.*
*He said he didn't like them.*
*And she said that it didn't matter.*
*After that they drew.*
*And he drew all yellow and that was the way he felt about the morning.*
*And it was beautiful.*
*The teacher came and smiled at him.*
*"What's this?" she said. "Why don't you draw something like Ken is drawing?"*
*"Isn't that beautiful."*
*After that his mother brought him a tie.*
*And he always drew airplanes and rocketships like everyone else.*
*And he threw the old picture away.*
*And when he lay out alone looking at the sky it was big and blue and all of everything.*
*But he wasn't anymore.*
*He was square inside and brown.*
*And his hands were stiff*
*And he was like everyone else.*
*And all the things inside him that needed saying, didn't need it anymore.*
*It had stopped pushing*
*It was crushed*
*STIFF*
*Like everything else.*

One of the lessons of this poem is that as children experience disapproval of their efforts or of what they value, they become less willing to reveal themselves. The young man in the poem brought something of himself to school every day--his special perceptions of the sky and morning, his wanting to "explain things" as he saw them. All the other young people in his classes also brought something of themselves that they could use to express their individuality and that they could use in learning.

A teacher who valued individuality would have seen the young man's yellow painting of the morning as a gift of himself and as evidence of his trust in her. Had his expressions of his ideas and feelings been encouraged and used to make his learning meaningful, he would have had a foundation upon which to build his beliefs in himself as an individual. If he had had these, he could have protected himself by fighting back or consciously learning the game of "please the teacher."

His mother and his teacher probably thought they were helping him. But good intentions can be inadvertently destructive when they devalue what a person considers important about himself. His mother and his teacher did not see that his interest in art, his poetic writing, and his feelings were assets, which were already developed and needed only to be applied to other kinds of learning.

The point of this analysis is that individuals' self-confidence and self-esteem can be enhanced if they are able to use their ideas, values, and special interests in learning. This young man's self-concept was not a healthy one: he did not have a realistic idea of his abilities and potential and he did not value himself.

Fostering healthy self-concept is a goal of this program because we believe that knowing and valuing oneself is important to being an effective adult. The foundations for a healthy adult self-concept are created in one's family, in school, and in the community. There are methods that parents and teachers can use to support the development of healthy self-concept. Supporting children in using their own ideas and applying what they already know to new learning is one of this methods.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide information about what self-concept is, why healthy self-concept is a goal of the Responsive Education Program, and how teachers can help children enhance their concepts of themselves as they develop competence in school. Part I provides a definition of self-concept and discusses why the development of healthy self-concept is important. Part II notes some differences between children's and adults' self-concepts, and Part III describes the characteristics of children with healthy self-concepts. Part IV discusses ways of helping children develop and maintain healthy self-concepts.

## I. Self-Concept: What It Is and Why It Is Important

Self-concept is what one knows and feels about oneself.

Our self-concepts are what we know and feel about ourselves, or the combination of our self-images and self-esteem. What we know about ourselves--self-image--consists of our beliefs about our characteristics and aspects, such as our appearance, sex, cultural identity, intelligence, temperament, abilities, interests, and unique ways of interacting with others. Self-image is formed by what we observe about

ourselves, the responses we get from others, and what others observe about us.

What we feel about ourselves--self-esteem--consists of the value we place on the characteristics and aspects we perceive. Self-esteem is formed by the judgments we make about ourselves. The standards by which we make the judgments come from our family, community, culture, and personal values.

People with healthy self-concepts see themselves realistically and value themselves appropriately.

People who have healthy self-concepts see themselves realistically (have accurate self-images) in that they recognize their strengths and weaknesses and know what to expect of themselves under different circumstances. They also value themselves appropriately (have healthy self-esteem) in that they neither think they are "the greatest" nor think they are "no good." They feel good about their strengths and dislike, but accept, their weaknesses, and have confidence in their potential to grow. It is possible for individuals to see themselves realistically but attach inappropriate values to what they see. (For example, a student might know he received a B in a course but conclude that he is unintelligent because he did not receive an A; or children might know they are bilingual but feel ashamed of their primary language.) A healthy self-concept requires both a realistic view of oneself and an appropriate valuing of oneself.

We use the term "healthy" in order to emphasize the role that our self-perceptions and judgments play in enabling us to survive physically and psychologically. People are considered physically healthy when all their organs and biochemical processes are working effectively to keep them alive. We apply the same idea to self-concept. Individuals have healthy self-concepts when their knowledge and judgments of themselves are such that they can take care of themselves, both physically and psychologically.

## Why Development of Healthy Self-Concept Is Important

A healthy self-concept enhances one's ability to survive economically and seek satisfaction more effectively.

Having a healthy self-concept is important to adults because it contributes to our ability to survive (e.g., to hold a job, to find shelter, and to find means of protecting oneself) and to seek satisfaction (e.g., to choose the situation, relationships with others, and means of being creative that are most satisfying).

A healthy self-concept contributes to these abilities because it requires knowing our strengths and weaknesses and being able to predict what we can and can't do effectively. With this kind of knowledge, we can better choose the situations that provide for our needs and avoid those that do not, and form expectations that are achievable rather than frustrating. In addition, by knowing our interests, preferences, and values, we can more effectively choose the circumstances, activities, and relationships with others that are most satisfying.

A healthy self-concept is also important for living amidst the many cultures of our society and in the constant change that occurs as cultures exchange values and develop new ones. With clear concepts of ourselves as individuals with distinct cultural values, personal backgrounds, and personal characteristics, we are better able to know when we agree and when we disagree with values that conflict with our own, and to decide whether to keep our values or to modify them.

A clear sense of our own identity makes us better able to see similarities and differences between ourselves and others and to appreciate, rather than fear, diversity. Self-knowledge helps us see the similarities between ourselves and others, while respecting the differences, and thus be more accepting of people who appear to be different. This capacity is essential for being a productive member of a culturally pluralistic society.

A healthy self-concept also contributes to one's ability to be a productive member of a culturally pluralistic society, and to think flexibly in solving real-life problems.

Having a healthy self-concept also influences our ability to think flexibly to solve problems in real life. The cognitive skills that are needed for perceiving the many aspects of ourselves and their relationships to each other are the same ones that are used in perceiving and interpreting real-life situations. Individuals with a healthy self-concept will be less likely to believe that there is only one way of solving a problem and will have the confidence to risk making a hypothesis and learning from the results. This cognitive disposition is important in a complex and changing society.

We have described the possible long-range results of what teachers may encourage in elementary schools. In school, children can develop positive attitudes about themselves, basic skills essential for evaluating themselves, and a sense of competence.

## Why Healthy Self-Concept Is Important to Children in School

A healthy self-concept contributes to children's confidence in themselves as learners and to their ability to set realistic expectations.

Development of a healthy self-concept contributes to children's confidence in themselves as learners and to their ability to set realistic expectations.

Learning in elementary school involves risks to children's self-esteem because their performance is constantly subject to evaluation by teachers and others. Children need strong and flexible self-concepts in order to accept information about themselves, whether the information concerns their physical appearance, their relationship to others, their intelligence, or their performance in the classroom.

Confidence in oneself as a learner and the ability to make choices, use appropriate resources, and evaluate one's efforts contribute to the ability to solve problems effectively and appropriately. Because they have these capabilities, children with healthy self-concepts generally have high achievement in school. Children with low self-concepts can be high achievers, however. (For example, some children with low self-concepts may be motivated to do well in school by fear of rejection from their parents.) We believe that supporting affective growth by fostering the development of healthy self-concept is an important goal in itself.

*Self-concept is what children know and feel about themselves as individuals ...as learners.*

## II. Differences Between Children's and Adults Self-Concepts

Children's self-concepts differ from those of adults in several respects. It is important for teachers to know these differences in order to know what they might need to provide in the classroom.

Children's self-concepts differ from those of adults in the following ways:

Children's self-concepts differ from those of adults in several respects.

1. Because their knowledge of themselves is limited, their self-concepts are relatively undifferentiated.
2. They learn values relatively unquestioningly from people they consider authorities.
3. They are more dependent on others for help in solving problems.
4. They express their feelings more spontaneously and more authentically, although with less control. They are less clear about what they feel.

These aspects of children's self-concepts are likely to change as a result of maturation and learning at home and in school.

### Relatively Undifferentiated Self-Concepts

Children's self-images are less well-defined than those of adults. Young children know they are skinny, or fat, or tall, or light, or dark only because these features may have been pointed out or reacted to by others. They live their cultural and family heritage, but cannot tell you about it. They are unclear about their potential for learning, their intellectual abilities, and their capacities to enjoy working with other children. They can label only extremes of emotion or obvious feelings such as laughing or crying. They can not make the finer discriminations of identifying such feelings as admiration, pride, envy, or annoyance.

Children have relatively undifferentiated self-concepts.

Young children's beliefs about themselves are expressed in actions rather than in words. They cannot give abstract opinions about their characteristics (e.g., their looks or their ability to get along with other children) until they have acquired the reasoning abilities of a later stage of development.

Their beliefs about themselves are expressed in actions rather than words.

Their self-esteem is more suggestible than that of adults.

Children's self-esteem is more suggestible than that of adults. Young children acquire their self-esteem mainly through conditioning from others they consider important, e.g., parents, other family members, teachers, and peers. Their sense of their own worth depends on whether others like and accept them. They think globally and generalize praise and reprimands to likes or dislikes of them. They do not have the discrimination skills that would enable them to recognize that another person can dislike their behavior without disliking them.

## Values

Children acquire many of their values from family and community.

Children's feelings of self-worth reflect values they learn from members of their family and community. If their parents place importance on their getting good grades, they will think well of themselves or think poorly of themselves according to the results of their academic performance.

Some values grow out of personal characteristics.

Some values grow out of personal characteristics rather than being adopted from others. For example, children who have good physical coordination and enjoy sports will learn to value sports. Children who enjoy reading will learn to value reading. They will form values related to their unique interests as a result of their enjoyment of them.

Values become the standards by which children judge themselves.

Values become the standards by which children judge themselves and form their self-esteem. For example, they will consider themselves "smart" or "dumb" according to the value placed by their teachers, parents, and peers on a particular kind of performance in mathematics, reading, or science. In the course of learning, inside and outside of school, children eventually develop their own criteria for evaluating their performance.

## Dependency and Problem-Solving Skills

Young children are more dependent on others for help in solving problems

Young children tend to turn to someone for help when they encounter difficulties in solving a problem, whether the problem is mathematical or inter-personal. They have not yet developed the skills for solving many problems effectively; that is one of the sets of skills they learn in school.

Developing competence and confidence in problem solving in classroom activities is important to self-concept. Self-confidence enables children to be willing to risk trying new experiences and to gradually develop more independence. They change from

running to the teacher or others for answers to attempting to find solutions alone or with minimal help.

It is important for children to become independent, but it is also important that they learn to use others as resources when they need them. Children working cooperatively in a group exemplifies productive interdependence. Their ability to work by themselves for periods of time indicates independence.

The program supports productive interdependence as well as independence.

The Role of Feelings

The ability to express feelings in a way that is appropriate for a situation reflects a healthy self-concept. It requires accurate awareness of one's feelings, knowledge of what is appropriate for a situation, and adequate self-control.

Most children express their feelings freely. They have not learned to censor their immediate reactions as much as adults have. They develop more control as they grow older. Teachers can encourage children to continue to express authentic feelings while helping them develop more control. They can help children learn to decide what is appropriate by considering what they would gain or lose in a given situation. For example, a child who lashes out at others every time he is annoyed, is expressing feelings authentically but may be losing friends, or suffering retaliation from others.

Children tend to express their feelings more authentically than adults, but with less control. Teachers can help children learn to determine what is appropriate for a situation.

The use of feelings is especially important to the self-esteem part of self-concept. Self-esteem is a generalized feeling about oneself. This global feeling is a composite of smaller feelings associated with particular personal characteristics. For example, a child may feel very capable of hitting a baseball, but not of drawing a human figure on paper. Both of these judgments are part of that child's feeling of self-worth.

Children can learn to identify and distinguish their feelings by learning to label them accurately. Primary-grade children can do so by simply using (to themselves) the proper labels, e.g., "I am mad right now," or "I feel shy." Teachers should be aware that children's behavior may provide better clues to their feelings than their words. A girl who blushes after being asked to sit down, may say, "I don't care," but the evidence of her real feeling may be the blush on her face or the fact that she is staring down at her desk. If she could say to herself, "I am embarrassed,"

Children can learn to distinguish their feelings by learning to label them accurately.

instead of "I don't care," she would be learning to label her feelings accurately and perhaps becoming better able to handle that particular feeling in other situations.

## III. Characteristics of Children with Healthy Self-Concepts

Children with healthy self-concepts generally show certain characteristics. These characteristics can be summarized as follows:

1. They use their own values, ideas and learning styles in their activities.

2. They tend to make their own decisions, to attempt to solve problems on their own by using available resources and working effectively within the limits of situations.

3. They express their feelings authentically and appropriately for a situation.

4. They use feedback from others and their own observations to assess themselves and acknowledge their strengths and weaknesses and take credit for their accomplishments.

### An Example of a Child with a Healthy Self-Concept[1]

Children may differ in the behaviors that demonstrate the characteristics of a healthy self-concept.

The following anecdote, which describes a child during one morning in a primary-grade classroom, describes some ways children may demonstrate these characteristics. It is important to note that while children with healthy self-concepts generally have these characteristics, they may differ in the behaviors that demonstrate them. For example, some children may be more assertive and enjoy being leaders; others may prefer to work in cooperation with a group as followers. The child described below is more like the first type. She is assertive and able to work independently as well as with others.

> It is 9 a.m. in a combination first- to third-grade classroom. It is language period; children have choices of activities.
>
> Jessica looks through the story file and finds one she wants to read. She chooses a one-page story from the students' story file and lies on her stomach on the rug reading it, and then

writing what she thought of the story. She spends half an hour reading and writing, then smiles to herself and puts the answer sheet in the teacher's folder.

She goes to the puzzle shelf and takes the three-minute salt timer and a picture puzzle made of cubes to the open floor. The cubes can be arranged to make four different pictures. She sets the timer and calmly turns the cubes over and over until she finds the sides that match. After ten minutes, I ask her whether she has done all the puzzles. She says "No, I did two of them." I ask, "Did you use the timer?" "No, I started to but I always finish before the salt gets all the way down."

Later, during kickball, she is in the outfield. A high kick comes her way. She runs to it, makes an open-armed catch, throws it back to the pitcher, and grins.

During her free-choice activity period, she walks through the class; as she passes the table where the teacher is helping children mix ingredients for pie crusts, the teacher asks, "Jessica, is this your free-choice time or are you to be working on your math?" She replies, "It is my free-choice time." She then goes with Lois to the far end of the room to the record player. She and Lois try to make the record player work. After a few minutes of trying, she leaves Lois at work on the record player and goes to the library-book rack. She sits down with Lisa and together they read "The King That Reigned for 40 Years."

Lois comes to her, takes her by the hand, and starts tugging at her and saying "Come on over, I got it to work." Jessica looks at her and pulls her hand away with a matter-of-fact comment: "I don't want to listen to records right now." Lois goes away and Jessica comes to me with a question, "Is there another word for reign?" I explain that it means to rule as a king rules. She says "Oh!"; then she walks away. She says to Lisa as she approaches her, "Lisa, it means to rule, you know, like kings are supposed to do."

Jessica demonstrated the characteristics of children with healthy self-concepts in the following ways:

1) Using own values, ideas, and learning styles in activities.

- She used her own interests and values when she picked the story that she wanted to read, the free-choice activity that pleased her, and the book she read with Lisa.
- She used her own ideas when modifying the use of the puzzles and choosing what she wanted to do during free-choice time. Finding new ways to play games or unusual methods of solving problems are typical of these children.
- She used her own learning style by working independently on the floor at her own pace and later with another child when reading.

2) Making decisions and solving problems by using available resources and working effectively within the limits of a situation.

- She made her own decisions when directing herself to her choice of language activity, working with the puzzle, and choosing to read with Lisa rather than to play records.
- She solved her own problems when modifying the puzzle procedure, refusing to listen with Lois, and finding the definition of the word reign. These children prefer to and attempt to solve problems on their own first before asking for help. They are willing to ask for help when they need it.
- She used available resources by finding the story she wanted to read, choosing from the variety of activities during free-choice time, and being willing to ask one of the adults in the classroom for help with the story she was reading with Lisa. These children are aware of resources and are willing to use them to help themselves.
- She worked effectively within the limits of the classroom by using the language-development period for reading a story and writing, and later, choosing an activity when the teacher

noticed her walking around the room. She did not throw a tantrum; she found something she was interested in doing. Spoiled children have difficulty working within limits and very reticent children have difficulty allowing themselves to enjoy activities without being told.

3) Expressing feelings authentically and appropriately.

- She expressed her feelings spontaneously when she smiled after completing her writing, and when she grinned after catching the kickball. The feelings she expressed were appropriate to the situation and authentic.

4) Using feedback from others and own observations for self-assessment, acknowledgement of strength and weaknesses, and taking credit for accomplishments.

- She used feedback effectively when the teacher questioned her walking around the room. She did not put herself down with embarrassment nor did she create an argument. She provided for feedback to herself in other instances when she completed her language task and when she caught the kickball. These are incidents of self-evaluation. Typically, these children gain confidence from their success and can learn from mistakes, rather than denying them.

- She took credit when she celebrated her success upon catching the kickball. These children recognize when they are successful and when they are not, without over-reacting to either of those.

Jessica demonstrated to various degrees many of the characteristics of children with healthy self-concepts. Her example should not necessarily be taken as the model of a child with a healthy self-concept, since children may demonstrate these same characteristics in many different ways.

It is important to recognize that no one child has all of these characteristics, nor do all children consistently behave in this way all of the time. However, psychologically healthy children tend to behave in this way more of the time than those who are not as well developed.

## IV. Helping Children to Develop Healthy Self-Concepts

We have described the characteristics of children with healthy self-concepts. What the teacher most needs to know is how he or she can foster the development of these characteristics. Four conditions[1] have been found to help children to develop realistic self-images and high self-esteem (healthy self-concepts):

Four conditions have been found to help children develop healthy self-concepts.

1. Acceptance by the persons who are important to them.

2. Provision of freedom to make choices and decisions within clear, consistent limits.

3. Communication of clear standards that children can use to judge their behavior and the results of their efforts.

4. Opportunities and directions to integrate what they experience into their self-concepts.

These conditions lead to guidelines for teachers.

These conditions provide the basis for guidelines for teachers to use in helping children develop and maintain healthy self-concepts. Below, we discuss the four conditions and then the guidelines.

### Children Need to Feel Accepted In The Classroom

Children are unique in themselves, as a result of cultural, family, and personal characteristics. All children have a culture they inherit, interpreted to them through their family and community. For example, first-generation Chicano children inherit the Spanish language, Mexican food and music and folklore, and specific expectations about the roles of boys and girls, adults and children. Children of other ethnic groups may inherit other languages or dialects, preferences, ways of interacting with each other, and role expectations. Children also have personal values that grow out of their personal interests and characteristics (e.g., an athletic child will probably value sports; a child who enjoys fantasy books will probably value reading).

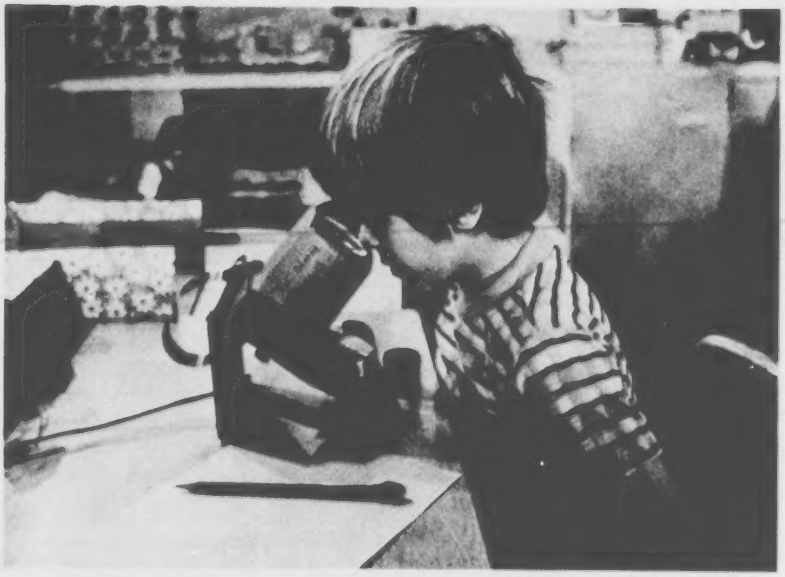
Children's values, ideas, and feelings should be accepted

Children will feel accepted in the classroom if their values are understood, and if they have an opportunity to use them in the course of learning. This condition requires that the teacher have nonprejudicial attitudes and be able to value the fact that

children bring to the classroom already-developed capabilities for language, interaction, and thinking. It also requires that the materials and the nature of activities be familiar to them.

Children need to feel, for instance, that their natural language or dialect is accepted. In previous times, Spanish-speaking children were forbidden to speak Spanish in public schools. This practice communicated to them that their language was undesirable as compared to English. A similar attitude was reflected towards Black children who spoke nonstandard English. Criticisms of their speech and phrasing implied that their speech was inferior.

Likewise, the attitudes and behaviors valued by traditional classroom teaching (e.g., children working quietly and independently, following the teacher's directions explicitly, sitting for long periods of time, and competing effectively) may conflict with those valued by certain ethnic or cultural groups. For example, many Mexican families value modesty and cooperative effort. Children from these families would not feel that their traits were acceptable in the "traditional" classroom. To enable them to feel supported in their efforts to learn, the classroom would have to provide for their learning styles and paces.



*Children value themselves as they use their own ideas and their own choice of resources.*

Acceptance is also communicated to children by support for their use of their ideas and feelings. The teacher who listens and encourages a child to try an idea gives the child confidence to use his or her own intelligence and to value the consequences, whether or not they turn out as the child expected. Children will shout, laugh, or complain in annoyance during the course of a day. They learn about the variety of feelings and the use of them as they and others express them in the course of their activities. They can learn to label some of the more obvious kinds of feelings as they discover what they like and dislike and as they see others angry or laughing.

## Children Can Assume Some Responsibility For Their Own Learning

Children can assume some responsibility over their own learning if they have freedom to make choices and decisions within clear, consistent limits.

One of the most important aspects of self-concept that needs to be developed in the classroom is that of children seeing themselves as capable learners by learning what they can and can't do well. By knowing their strengths and weaknesses, they can judge for themselves when they are likely to succeed and when they are not in carrying out learning activities or in interacting with other children.

To develop this knowledge, children must feel safe enough to learn by trial and error and to risk trying new experiences. Acceptance by teachers and peers provides one aspect of safety. The other is provided by their having some control over their learning. This requirement means that the teacher enable children to choose from a variety of activities, to make their own decisions, to use resources, and to hear comments about their actions. The choices provided must be appropriate to the capabilities of the children. In other words, children should have freedom within limits. For instance, it may be appropriate to provide two or three choices in a language activity rather than six if the children have not yet become accustomed to making such decisions for themselves. It is appropriate to make sure that the levels of difficulty and nature of the materials is appropriate to the developmental level of the children. Appropriate choices provide children with higher chances of success while providing them with opportunities to experience making their own decisions.

## Self-Evaluation and Credit Taking

Some children are more aware that they are capable of solving problems on their own, while others

tend to give the credit to people or conditions outside of themselves. Those who credit themselves for the results of what they do are described as having an internal locus of control. Those who believe that results are caused by things outside of themselves are described as having an external locus of control. The internal child would say, "I got that right 'cause I know how to do it," upon completing a math problem. The external child would say, "I was lucky on that one."

Children need to develop standards by which they can evaluate themselves and take credit.

Only a few children are either of these extremes. Most children are combinations. The desired objective is for children to learn to take credit for what they truly accomplish for themselves, and to give credit for what is accomplished with the help of others. To help children develop this ability, a teacher can create opportunities for highly internal children to work in group situations that require the efforts of all of the children, and opportunities for highly external children to work independently and experience accomplishing things on their own.

Children can be more responsible for their own learning when they can take credit for what they themselves accomplish and when they can give credit for what is accomplished with the help of others.

Children who can take credit for their accomplishments, their unique heritage, or their personal characteristics can look at themselves and say, "I like this and I don't like that about myself." They can smile with satisfaction when they have successfully completed a puzzle that has been difficult, or can say to themselves or to others, "I like the colors in my picture, but I don't like the way I drew the lines." Those who can not take credit might leave the puzzle without a response, or might say when asked about the picture, "Oh, I don't know," or "It is just something I drew."

Children who never take credit for their successes will not see themselves as being competent or effective. They will fear mistakes because they view mistakes as evidence that they have failed rather than as information they can use to guide themselves the next time. Children who can not take credit also have difficulty giving credit to others. They may compensate for feelings of failure by pretending they don't care or are better than others, or by putting themselves down and envying or adulating the accomplishments of others.

Children learn to take credit by learning how to evaluate themselves and their accomplishments. To be willing to risk looking at themselves they must feel safe from ridicule or from resentful criticisms from those who may be jealous of their accomplishments. In order to provide an appropriate environment, teachers should be aware that children have different styles of acknowledging their accomplishments. Some prefer to do so privately, others by smiling, others by showing their work or talking about it, others by sharing in pairs, and others by writing about it to share with others or just for themselves.

Teachers can support children in taking credit by providing them opportunities to correct their own papers, to choose their favorite work, to review the day and identify what was especially important to them, or to display their work if they so choose.

## Integration of What Is Experienced into Self-Concept

Integration is the process of finding personal meaning in an experience. It can be said to have taken place when a person can apply what is learned to a new situation.

Children should have opportunities to integrate their experience into their self-concepts.

Integration of what has been experienced into self-concept is the process of translating that experience into an observation or belief about oneself. For example, a child who learns how to subtract later integrates the ability to perform that operation into a belief about herself. She would say to herself or others, "I can subtract." Although this process is often left to take place by chance, it is essential for the development of healthy self-concept. Teachers can support this process by providing children opportunities to evaluate and take credit for the work that they have done.

Children integrate at different paces. For example, some may very quickly accept that they are good at mathematics. Others may need the evidence of repeated successful performance before they come to believe that.

Integration takes place with the help of feedback from results or from others. Comments of approval or of opinions are forms of feedback. There is a limit to the amount of feedback an individual can take at one time. When learners receive too much feedback, they do not use it. A teacher must know the individual differences among children in order

to insure that they are integrating their accomplishments as well as their lack of success into a realistic self-concept.

Expectations grow out of integration of what is experienced. For example, children who have done well in adding columns of numbers will expect to be able to add in the future. Children who are accustomed to success in solving various problems will expect to have a chance of success when they attempt new problems. Teachers can facilitate integration of experience by providing opportunities for children to evaluate their experiences by identifying what was important, take credit for success, and note failure, and to apply what they learned to new situations. A child who has learned to add effectively might correct his paper and identify the skills he used for doing the work, and later use these same skills for keeping score in a game.

## Guidelines for Supporting Healthy Self-Concept in Classrooms

The conditions we have just discussed provide the basis for teacher guidelines for supporting the behaviors characteristic of healthy self-concept in children. These guidelines are:

The conditions provide the basis for teacher guidelines for supporting healthy self-concept.

1) The teacher supports children in using their values, ideas, and learning styles by:

a. providing a clear focus for activities

b. providing materials and topics that encourage children to express their feelings and ideas

c. providing choices of activities at different levels.

2) The teacher supports children in solving problems, using resources, and making decisions within limits by:

a. providing opportunities for decision making

b. supporting and guiding rather than telling answers

c. making the rules and limits clear, as well as the possibilities within them.

3) The teacher supports children in using their feelings authentically and appropriately to the situation by:

a. encouraging children to express their feelings in various media

b. helping children express their feelings in a way that obtains satisfaction they seek.

4) The teacher supports children in using feedback effectively, taking credit, and integrating what they experience by:

a. providing opportunities for children to evaluate their work and behavior and receive positive and negative information about themselves

b. providing opportunities for children to celebrate what they are proud of or acknowledge what they do not like

c. providing opportunities for children to express what was important in various media and apply what they have learned to new situations.

*Children gain confidence to learn when they have support to solve problems on their own.*

## Learner Objectives

The learner outcome objectives for healthy self-concept specify behaviors that we hope will characterize individuals (as children or as adults) whose affective growth has been supported in this way. The objectives are that individuals:

Four learner objectives specify outcomes related to healthy self-concept.

1. Use their own ideas and values.
2. Work effectively within limits and draw on available resources when solving problems.
3. Express feelings authentically and appropriately.
4. Acknowledge their strengths and weaknesses, take credit for their accomplishments, and give others credit for their accomplishments.

## Conclusion

Although children arrive in kindergarten with self-concepts that have already have taken form, their self-concepts change as a result of their experiences in school. Being in school exposes them to other people who differ in cultural background, values, attitudes, and ways of interacting with others. Their success or failure in learning activities will influence their beliefs about themselves as competent learners. Through comparisons between themselves and others, they learn how they are similar and different. From the results of their performances and the attitudes of teachers, they form expectations of themselves that later become aspirations for careers and personal fulfillment.

The school cannot be held responsible for the total development of children's self-concept. They are primarily responsible for the aspect of self-concept that has to do with ability to learn and social desirability.

We consider the school responsible for helping children to develop towards three goals: development of problem-solving abilities, of healthy self-concept, and of culturally pluralistic attitudes and behaviors. These three goals complement each other; cognitive skills are essential for forming self-perceptions and evaluating oneself, and the development of healthy self-concept is necessary for forming attitudes of acceptance of others.

Healthy self-concepts supports and complements the other goals of the program.

Children with healthy self-concepts generally do well in the classroom because they are self-directing, resourceful, and able to make choices. High achievement is not always related to healthy self-concept, however; children's psychological health is a goal in itself.

## Note

1. The first three conditions have been identified by Stanley Coopersmith. Some applications of the fourth condition have been adapted from the work of Eugene and Juanita Sagan of the Institute for Creative and Artistic Development, Oakland, Calif.

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# 5 CULTURAL PLURALISM IN THE RESPONSIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM

## Introduction

As a goal of the Responsive Education Program, cultural pluralism focuses on promoting parent and community involvement with the schools, providing an equitable classroom environment, and increasing learners' abilities to interact democratically with others.

The Responsive Education Program defines cultural pluralism as follows:

> Cultural pluralism exists when groups of people share power equitably, understand and respect one another, and are self-determining. It demands respecting and encouraging diverse ways of seeing and doing things. It does not exist when racism, ethnocentrism,* or economic oppression place people in subordinate positions.

Cultural pluralism promotes equity.

Many school districts and curriculum designers are considering cultural pluralism important because some children of color and many low-income students of all ethnic groups have not been successful in schools; and many academically successful white children who have limited contact with members of other ethnic groups have narrow world views and are ill prepared to solve world problems humanistically.

Schools have not provided fair or broad enough experiences for most learners.

Many children of color leave school early.[1] Some who stay are absent frequently, others seem disruptive when present, and still others find little relationship between their experience in school and their out-of-school lives. Parents and students realize that schools provide inadequate preparation and counseling for the world of work or higher education.[2]

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*We define "racism" as any attitude, act, or institutional structure that subordinates an individual or group on the basis of color. "Ethnocentrism" is a belief in the inherent superiority of one's own group and culture.

White children who have little contact with members of other ethnic groups may form unconscious but deeply rooted assumptions that "normal" society consists only of white people and that people of color are "strange" and "different."[3] In addition, many white children are unaware of the roles played by various white ethnic groups in our country's economy and politics.[4]

Schools must prepare learners to meet their survival needs and the problems of society.

The Responsive Education Program assumes that schools must provide the opportunity for all students to become highly educated, thoughtful people who are able to meet their survival needs and the pressing problems of society. We believe that schools have the responsibility of creating a classroom environment that responds to the needs, concerns, and motivations of all learners and their families by respecting different ways of seeing and doing things. Moreover, schools must provide opportunities for learners to develop attitudes and skills that may promote a culturally pluralistic society.

Part I of this chapter, "Why Cultural Pluralism?" discusses economic oppression and racism in our society, the rationale for cultural pluralism, and strategies for promoting equity in the schools. Part II, "How is Cultural Pluralism Implemented in the Classroom?" discusses ways of implementing the strategies and gives some examples.

*Schools must enable all students to become highly educated, able to meet their needs and the problems of society.*

## I. Why Cultural Pluralism?

### Our Society Values Democracy But Practices Inequity

Through the Declaration of Independence and Supreme Court decisions, the United States subscribes to democracy. Democracy is a state of society characterized by formal equality of political and social rights and privileges; we would expect that in a democracy, equity,* respect for human rights, and social justice would prevail.[5] And because our government is based on democratic ideals, we would expect that children in public schools would experience democracy in action while learning about democratic living.

Our society values democracy but practices inequity.

Economic subordination and racism in our society have produced inequity, however, and schools have perpetuated it.[6] Although some legal and practical steps toward change have been made, we believe that attempts to solve the educational problems mentioned earlier have not adequately addressed the issue of inequity. Consequently, these efforts have not made a significant difference in the life chances of children. To clarify the inequitable behaviors and attitudes that schools perpetuate, we will briefly discuss economic oppression and racism in our society.

Schools have reflected the practices of society.

### Economic Oppression

We believe that although people may vary as to the degree of power they wish to exert over others, most individuals and groups would like to enjoy as much self-determination--or influence over their life chances and experiences--as possible. In our capitalist society, however, groups are vertically ordered on the basis of ethnicity and economic status, and power over one's life chances and experience requires superior economic standing.

In our society, groups are vertically ordered on the basis of ethnicity and economic status.

Economic position is largely determined by birth and perpetuated by training and strategic use of power. Traditionally, those in power have prepared their children for positions of leadership by training them in habits of responsibility, industriousness, self-control, and thrift, even before the children's skills and IQ's are known,[7] and transmitting to them values and attitudes that support the maintenance of their

Economic status is maintained by training and strategic use of power.

*We define "equity" as fairness and impartiality, determined either by conscience or by law.

position. For example, some members of the upper class have believed that strikes should be illegal, while members of the working class believe that strikes are necessary to insure a decent standard of living.[8]

Those in power have also used competitive strategies against other groups to protect their position. Although our society purports to value free enterprise, those at the top of the economic hierarchy have brought about the establishment of standards, laws, fees, controls, and codes that protect their interests. The acquisition and retention of jobs is influenced by a person's manners, speech, dress, recreational activities, and social attitudes, which are in turn influenced by economic status.

While high-income groups have maintained their position over others, low-income groups have suffered from inadequate diets, poor housing, health problems, and crime.

Racism

Racism has its roots in ethnocentric attitudes toward people of different behavior, appearance, and values.

In addition, people of color in our society have been subordinated by white groups. This subordination has its roots in ethnocentric attitudes toward people whose behavior, appearance, and values were different, and evolved into individual and institutional acts that oppressed groups of people. Some historical examples may shed light on the racism that currently exists in our society and is reflected in the schools.

For example,* when English traders encountered Blacks in West Africa during the sixteenth century, they did so with an ethnocentric world view that was influenced by a concern for the moral decay in their own country; a notion that "black" meant dirty, vile, and repulsive; and a religious attitude that favored

*This synopsis of racism is one example of the development of behavior that subordinates a group of people because of appearance. Records of ancient history depict racist attitudes in China in the third century B.C., in Egypt in the thirteenth century B.C., and in India five thousand years ago.[10] Other examples of racism in American history are the judgments found in sixteenth century Spanish and British literature that the Syberian (Native American) was inferior because of appearance,[11] and the United States' subjugation of Mexican and Native American peoples during its conquest of the northern half of Mexico in 1849.[12]

rigid discipline.[9] Descriptions from logs and diaries register the shock and intrigue that the English traders experienced as they exchanged goods with a group of people whose behavior and appearance were different from their own. They perceived the differences as indications that the Blacks were a cursed, undisciplined people, and judged them to be inferior to Englishmen.

A group's ethnocentric world view led to the judgment that different appearance and behavior of another group indicated inferiority.

These racist attitudes did not immediately result in racist behavior. Although most groups of people participated in some form of enslaving religious captives and criminals during this period, the English did not favor slavery because it violated their concept of liberty. After 1640, however, English and other European settlers did engage in the slave trade.[13] The Europeans' demand for captives to sell as slaves, combined with the Africans' demand for European goods, led to the institutionalization of slavery.[14]

Slavery on the basis of color is an example of a racist behavior.

In the early days of the United States, people of all colors were engaged in servitude of various kinds (e.g., slavery, indenture). The degree of exploitation varied, however, according to the degree to which a group's values and behaviors resembled those of the English. Scottish, Welsh, and Irish people received better treatment than Native American and Black people. A host of "scientific" works and laws supported the subordination of people of color, and the laws made such subordination easily transferable to other groups of color. (For example, in 1854 the Supreme Court of California declared in the case of People v. Hall that Chinese people fell within the purview of a law that stated that "No Black or mulatto person, or Indian, shall be allowed to give evidence in favor of, or against, a white man."[15])

Racism has been profitable to those in power and costly to those oppressed and to society.

Although many overtly racist acts have now been declared illegal, institutional racism perpetuates the subordination of people of color, and even engages people of color and whites, who are trying to destroy racism, in participating unwittingly with those who are deliberately racist. Racism has benefited white groups by reducing job competition, increasing income (e.g., through high rents and credit terms for people of color), providing control over government, and, for those who need it, providing a means of feeling superior. It has been costly to the oppressed and society, by reducing natural output and human potential, creating internal tensions, and diminishing our international credibility. A definition of our society must include all the groups within it, although

many have suffered from subordinate positions in society. Asa Hilliard has said, "People of color, coupled with white people, are the mainstream culture."[16]

## The Schools' Role in Perpetuating Inequity

Schools have perpetuated these societal inequities by stratifying students, valuing white middle-class culture and modes of behavior, and teaching cognitive skills selectively.[17]

Schools have perpetuated inequity by stratifying students and valuing white middle-class culture and behavior.

Although schools have been considered sources of equal opportunity and agents of social mobility and change, their historical purpose has been to maintain morality and contribute to the economic growth of the country by providing disciplined workers. As early as 1800, schools were intended to socialize "unruly" immigrants to the controlled ways of the Western European. Separate curricula for children of workers and children of industrial leaders were designed to provide each group with the information and skills appropriate for their position in society. Though a small percentage of the poor achieved higher status and knowledge that contributed to their ability to bring about social change, schools convinced most of the poor that the education system was sound and that inadequate educations were the fault of the students.

The contemporary education system reflects and perpetuates inequity more subtly, through tracking related to ethnic and economic standing, inequitable distribution of funds (e.g., proportionally low amounts given to districts with high percentages of urban and rural poor[18]), conscious and unconscious biases in the attitudes and behaviors of teachers and counselors, and biases in tests and curriculum materials. Labels such as "underachiever," "disadvantaged," and even "mentally retarded" often camouflage the schools' failure to provide low-income children and children of color with adequate educations.

In a report on a study of the relationship between a group of children's socio-economic status and their teacher's expectations, Ray Rist describes some inequities in teacher attitudes and behavior.[19] At the beginning of the children's kindergarten year, their teacher divided them into three work groups that reflected her expectations of their achievement. The assignments, which were based on interviews with parents and informal observation of the children, were related to the children's socio-economic status; later

IQ tests showed no significant statistical differences between the three groups. Children in the group the teacher labeled as "fast learners" spoke standard English, were well-groomed, and verbalized freely. Those in the groups she labeled as "slow learners" spoke a dialect; had tattered and dirty clothing, unkempt hair, and body odor; and kept a distance from the teacher.

Teacher expectations based on socio-economic status have resulted in unfair ability grouping and unfair treatment of children.

During the year, the teacher expected a higher quality of work from the "fast learners" than from the "slow learners," paid more attention to them during instruction, and reacted to them more often with encouraging rather than controlling verbal behavior. She also selected children from the higher-status group for leadership and special tasks, and modeled demeaning and subordinating behaviors toward the lower-status groups. The "fast learners" affirmed the teacher's expectations by responding with more of the behaviors that had won them her attention and support. The "slow learners" responded by withdrawing physically or mentally, and some were disruptive. In addition, both the higher-status group and the lower-status groups became more hostile and belittling toward members of the lower-status groups. Children who remained in the same school were stratified similarly in first and second grade.

Other inequities are prohibitions against the primary language and preferred learning mode of some children.

Ramirez and Castañeda[20] state that prohibitions on the use of Spanish in the classroom have discriminated against Spanish-speaking children by preventing them from expressing themselves in familiar ways and from learning basic concepts in their primary language. Moreover, some children may learn better in a relational mode* than in the independent, analytical mode traditionally used in the schools.

Teachers sometimes discriminate against children of color.

The United States Commission on Civil Rights[21] found that in 429 classrooms in Texas, New Mexico, and California, teachers used "accepting" behaviors toward Anglo students 40 percent more often than they did toward Mexican-American students. Significantly more Anglo students were assigned seats close to the teacher and the front of the room. The teachers were generally unaware of the bias in their behavior. Other studies have illustrated similar discrimination toward Native American students[22] and other children of color.

*In the relational mode of learning, individuals work closely and cooperatively with peers, get support from adults, and learn basic concepts in the context of familiar stories and anecdotes.

Standardized tests have also discriminated against children of color.

Jane Mercer's study[23] of classification procedures reveals that classification based on standardized tests has labeled a disproportionately large number of children of color as intellectually subnormal. Many psychologists and educators have joined the Bay Area Black Psychologists and the Association of Psychologists of La Raza in calling for a moratorium on IQ testing. Mercer states that children should have the right to be evaluated within a culturally appropriate normative framework, to be assessed as multi-dimensional beings, and to be free of stigmatizing labels.

## Strategies for Combating Oppression

Strategies for combating oppression include
- increasing awareness of oppression
- promoting policies and programs that reduce oppression
- making possible and encouraging self-determination.

The United States Commission on Civil Rights[24] suggests several strategies for combating oppression, including 1) increasing awareness of the existence of racism and its costs to society; 2) influencing local, state, and national governments to produce policies and programs that reduce oppression; 3) developing legislature and other programs in which it is to the advantage of whites [or the well-to-do] to support programs that aid people of color [and the poor]; 4) encourage and enable people of color [and the poor] to plan, make decisions on, and direct policies and programs.

Paulo Freire[25] suggests that members of oppressed groups should analyze their situations in society and act with others to transform limiting situations, and that concerned members of the oppressing group should fight at their side.

## The Rationale for Cultural Pluralism

The Responsive Education Program believes that cultural pluralism is an appropriate goal for the creation of equity in education, because it is based on equitable interactions within and between groups of people.

Between 1880 and 1920, when more than 40 million people immigrated to the United States, three major theories about the absorption of the new groups were debated: the "melting pot" theory, Anglo-conformity, and cultural pluralism. The "melting pot" process was initially conceived as a mingling of many white ethnic groups into a totally new group.[27] However, although many of the different white ethnic groups were assimilated into one culture, they did not "melt" into a new group. Instead, they conformed to the behaviors and values of the early Anglo-Saxon Protes-

tant settlers. Thus Anglo-conformity was and is the most prevalent process of absorption in our society and education system.

Some white ethnic groups resisted conformity by maintaining their own language, religion, customs, and political cohesion, however, and people of color were not permitted to "melt" or conform. Although cultural pluralism was never a political reality, it represented for these groups an ideal toward which society should work.

Five main points form the historical rationale for cultural pluralism as a socialization process. Three of these points are the beliefs that in a society that values democracy, 1) groups have a right to be different; 2) all groups, though different, should be equal; and 3) groups should know about and respect other groups. Horace Kallen, a nineteenth century social philosopher, provided the basis for these conclusions in a series of essays that argue that the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution support pluralism and that the nation benefits from the interaction among various ethnic groups and cultures. Milton Gordon summarizes one of Kallen's statements as follows:

The rationale for cultural pluralism includes the points that:

- groups have a right to be different;
- all groups, though different, should be equal;
- groups should know about and respect other groups.

> "Cultural pluralism...is entirely in harmony with the traditional ideals of American political and social life, and...indeed, any attempt to impose Anglo-Saxon conformity constitutes a violation of those ideals. The Declaration of Independence and the Preamble and Amendments to the Constitution are declared to be the central documents of 'the American Idea,' and their support for the doctrine of equality is interpreted to mean support for the concept of 'difference' as well. '"Equal,"' in the intent of the Declaration, Kallen states, 'is an affirmation of the right to be different.' Differences of various sorts among human beings are inevitable, and in all other countries these differences had served as the occasion for hereditary privilege and power. However, 'to all this the Declaration said, No. Female and male, Indian, Negro and white, Irishman, Scotchman, and Englishman, German and Spaniard and Frenchman, Italian and Swede and Pole, Hindu and Chinaman, butcher, baker and candlestick maker, workingman and gentleman, rich man and poor man, Jew and Quaker and Unitarian

and Congregationalist and Presbyterian and Catholic--they are all different from each other and different as they are, all equal to each other.'"[28]

John Dewey elaborated on this theme by identifying the role the public school can play in increasing understanding and respect among groups:

> "Such terms as Irish-American or Hebrew-American or German-American are false terms because they seem to assume something which is already in existence called America, to which the other factor may be externally hitcht [sic] on. The fact is, the genuine American, the typical American, is himself a hyphenated character. This does not mean that he is part American and that some foreign ingredient is then added. It means that, as I have said, he is international and interracial in his makeup. He is not American plus Pole or German. But the American is himself Pole-German-English-French-Spanish-Italian-Greek-Irish-Scandinavian-Bohemian-Jew and so on. The point is to see to it that the hyphen connects instead of separates. And this means at least that our public schools shall take pains to enlighten all as to the great past contributions of every strain in our composite makeup."[29]

Schools should enlighten students about the contributions of different groups.

Cultural pluralism is further supported by the points that:
- people tend to gain support from their ethnic group
- groups have thrived because people practice the traditions of their group and contribute to it.

Cultural pluralism is further supported by the points that 4) people have a natural tendency to gain social, emotional, and physical support from their own ethnic group; and 5) ethnic groups have thrived because people practice the traditions of their group and contribute to the enhancement of their group. History shows that the immigrants tended to form living situations with people most like themselves. At times, group identity was essential for survival of the individual. For example, the mid-nineteenth century thrust toward Anglo-conformity caused disorganization, ethnic self-hatred, and juvenile delinquency in some immigrant families as children perceived their parents to be ignorant. For a few, Jane Addams' work with immigrant women in Chicago helped children to regain respect for their parents' culture. Addams' work provided an example of affirmation of the value of different cultures.

Milton Gordon summarizes Randolph Bourne's argument for pluralism as follows:

> "Here at last might be founded the type of nation which the conditions of modern life demanded--one in which many nationalities would live in concert, each maintaining the flavor of its original heritage and its interest in its original homeland, at the same time combining to form a richer, more cosmopolitan culture in America and providing a lesson in international amity for other countries."[30]

We can conclude that cultural pluralism supports ethnic group identity, pluralism of groups and equality among groups. These three issues are inherent in Barbara Sizemore's Power Inclusion Model for Excluded Groups.* By synthesizing this model and the previously described strategies for combating oppression (page 82), we have identified the following strategies for moving toward more equity among groups in society:

1. Eradicate racism by increasing awareness of the cause and nature of the problem, analyzing society, and strengthening group cohesion and forming coalitions to transform oppressive situations.

2. Support group cohesion, self-legitimization and self-determination by establishing group identity, developing an economic base, and clarifying the group's relationship to oppression.

3. Encourage pluralism by promoting increased knowledge about and respect for other groups, positive interactions among groups, and coalitions of groups.

4. Establish equitable sharing of power through coalitions that guarantee all groups a fair opportunity to succeed.

Strategies for moving toward equity are
- eradicate racism
- support group cohesion
- encourage pluralism
- establish equitable sharing of power.

*Barbara Sizemore's Five Step Power Inclusion Model for Excluded Groups consists of five stages: Separatism, Nationalism (the first two focus on group identity and cohesion), Capitalism (which focuses on ethnic groups' acquisition of an economic base), Pluralism (which focuses on coalitions of financially equal groups), and Power (which focuses on democracy equality). For a more definitive discussion, see reference.[31]

Strategies for implementing cultural pluralism in schools are:
- promote parent and community participation
- promote an equitable classroom climate
- provide learning experiences that socialize for cultural pluralism.

From these strategies we can derive three strategies for implementing cultural pluralism in schools:

1. Promote parents' and community participation in planning, implementation, and evaluation of educational policies and programs.

2. Promote a learning environment that offers equitable opportunities for learning.

3. Provide learning experiences that socialize for culturally pluralistic skills, attitudes, and strategies, and for an interdependent community.

Figure 1 below summarizes the historical experience of inequity, the strategies for moving toward cultural pluralism in society, and the strategies for implementing cultural pluralism in schools.

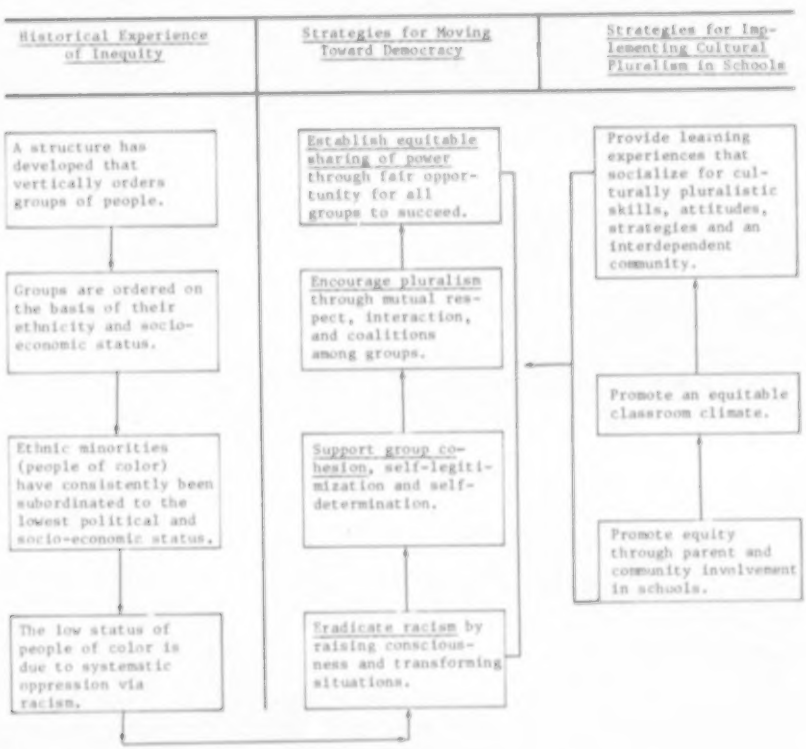

Historical Experience of Inequity
Strategies for Moving Toward Democracy
Strategies for Implementing Cultural Pluralism in Schools
A structure has developed that vertically orders groups of people.
Groups are ordered on the basis of their ethnicity and socio-economic status.
Ethnic minorities (people of color) have consistently been subordinated to the lowest political and socio-economic status.
The low status of people of color is due to systematic oppression via racism.
Establish equitable sharing of power through fair opportunity for all groups to succeed.
Encourage pluralism through mutual respect, interaction, and coalitions among groups.
Support group cohesion, self-legitimization and self-determination.
Eradicate racism by raising consciousness and transforming situations.
Provide learning experiences that socialize for culturally pluralistic skills, attitudes, strategies and an interdependent community.
Promote an equitable classroom climate.
Promote equity through parent and community involvement in schools.

Figure 1. Experience of Inequity and Strategies for Cultural Pluralism

Part II of this paper discusses ways of carrying out the strategies for implementing cultural pluralism in schools.

Learner Objectives

We anticipate that as a result of experiencing and learning in classrooms implementing cultural pluralism, students will be achieving the following objectives:

Three learner objectives are associated with the goal of implementing cultural pluralism in schools.

1. Learners know about their ethnic and/or cultural group,* like their group, and contribute to their group.

2. Learners know about other ethnic and cultural groups and respect and interact productively with people of other groups.

3. Learners know about their own and others' relationship to society and work with others to uphold human rights and achieve social justice.

## II. How is Cultural Pluralism Implemented in Schools?

Cultural pluralism in operation requires 1) parent and community participation in the schools; 2) an environment within which learners experience equitable opportunities for learning; and 3) learning experiences that guide learners to develop and practice skills and attitudes that may promote a pluralistic community. In this section, we describe ways of carrying out these strategies in the classroom.

### 1. Promote Equity Through Parent and Community Participation

An equitable classroom must respond to the values, learning styles, and lifestyles of the children within it. Understanding of the children and protection of their interests can be brought about by parents' and community members' participation in and evaluation of policies, programs, and activities, at the school level and at the classroom level. Parents

*An ethnic group is a group to which a person belongs because of birth (e.g., a national or racial group). A cultural group is a group characterized by a way of life (e.g., religion, language, lifestyle), to which a person belongs by birth or by choice.

Parent and community participation protects the interests of the children and their culture.

and community members can participate in setting goals that reflect their concerns, assessing needs, identifying and providing resources (including themselves), setting expectations and standards of quality, and identifying the survival skills needed by their children. Those who work in the classroom as teachers, teacher assistants, or volunteers can also provide role models for the children and knowledge of the children's culture and language.

## 2. Promote an Equitable Classroom Climate

To promote an equitable classroom climate, teachers should provide familiar and meaningful resources, and enable children to learn in their primary language and to set goals.

An equitable classroom climate is necessary to support not only cultural pluralism but also the other two goals of the Responsive Education Program, the development of problem-solving abilities and of healthy self-concept. In order to learn, children must be able to understand and find meaning in what is happening in the classroom.[32] Consequently, we expect teachers to discover facts about the children in their classrooms and then provide an environment and resources that are familiar and potentially meaningful to the children. For example, books should portray people who are similar to the learners in appearance and behavior. In addition, classrooms should contain adults of the children's ethnic and cultural groups.

To provide equitable opportunities for cognitive growth, teachers must enable children to discover and express new concepts and skills in their primary language, in their own learning style, and in the context of personally and culturally relevant activities. Since problem solving is best fostered when the teachers work with learners to plan, set goals, and clarify standards, teachers must seek to understand the perspectives and values on which learners' expectations are based.

Teachers must model and guide sensitivity to and respect for all groups.

Teachers must model and guide sensitivity to and respect for all groups. As children see materials representing many ethnic and socio-economic groups, they experience and gain respect for different people. Discussion of issues from the perspectives of different people affirms the value of differences and broadens children's understanding of the world. To create an equitable social climate, teachers must become sensitive to their own prejudices and the prejudices of others, identify and seek to eliminate unfair stereotypes and practices, and guide children to discard demeaning attitudes and behaviors.

### 3. Learning Experiences that Socialize for Culturally Pluralistic Skills and Attitudes and an Interdependent Community

We have suggested some ways of eliminating inequity in the classroom. We will now describe three general objectives for learning experiences that guide learners to interact democratically, and ways of implementing these objectives.

The general learning objectives are derived from the strategies for moving toward democracy (page 85) and the theories of Moore and Anderson[33] about the socialization of the young. From an analysis of primitive and contemporary cultures, Moore and Anderson have identified four features of people's relationship to their environment that each culture transforms into games and activities for socializing young children. The games and activities include puzzles, games of chance, games of strategy, and artistic endeavors such as painting, music, and drama. We believe that this method of socialization can be applied to classroom learning experiences.

Objectives for learning experiences combine cultural strategies for socializing the young and strategies for moving toward equity.

The four features identified by Moore and Anderson are people's relationship to predictable nature, their relationship to random elements of nature, their interactions with others like themselves, and their evaluation of aspects of group living. To derive our learning objectives, we have considered the last two features and added another feature, people's interactions with others unlike themselves. In the figure on the next page, we identified activities that socialize for cultural pluralism by combining these features and the strategies for moving toward equity.

From this analysis, we have derived the following objectives for learning experiences that socialize for cultural pluralism:

A. Learners discover facts about themselves, other people, the society in which we live, and their relationship to the society and other people.

B. Learners experience strategies for 1) cooperation within groups; 2) cooperation and competition among groups and teams; and 3) effecting social change to reform inhumane and unjust situations.

## C. Learners generate and integrate ideas and feelings about aspects of group living in relationship to their own daily experience.

Kindergarten to third-grade children are not capable of much abstract thinking. They will learn culturally pluralistic attitudes and behaviors primarily through observation and experience in the equitable classroom environment that the teacher designs with their help. We turn now to a discussion of ways of providing experiences that meet the objectives.

| Cultural Features | + | Strategies for Moving Toward Democracy | = | Nature of Classroom Activities that Socialize for Cultural Pluralism |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. People interacting with others like themselves. | + | 1. Support group cohesion, self-legitimization and self-determination. | = | 1a. Cooperative Strategies (e.g., teamwork to transform real concern)<br>b. Historical and contemporary facts and processes of our culture (e.g., artifacts, dance, music, history, current events, folklore, etc.) |
| 2. Individuals and groups interacting with individuals and groups that are different. | + | 2. Encourage pluralism through mutual respect, interaction, and coalitions among groups.<br>3. Promote autonomy* | = | 2a. Historical and contemporary facts and processes of other cultures (e.g., same as 1b plus diverse ways of perceiving and behaving)<br>b. Cooperative Strategies (e.g., jigsaw route to learning**)<br>c. Conflict Strategies (e.g., self-protection for survival) |
| 3. People evaluating aspects of group living. | + | 4. Eradicate racism by raising consciousness and transforming situations. | = | 3. Awareness and integration of own relationship to society (e.g., real or simulated experiences, play monopoly then discuss from perspective of group to which learners belong; and/or use of dialogue, graphics, music, literature to express attitudes and feelings about situations, circumstances and events) |

*We have changed the strategy of "establishing equitable sharing of power" to the strategy of "promoting autonomy" because young children do not share power equally with adults. In the classroom, teachers can socialize children for equitable sharing of power by guiding them to become independent and autonomous in their learning.

**The jigsaw route to learning and liking is a learning experience process developed by Elliott Aronson in which children of different social/economic or ethnic groups work in teams. Each is given a "piece" of a problem. In order to complete the task, each must use the other as a resource. Studies have demonstrated increased self-concept, liking of peers, and productive interdependence as results. For more information, see reference.[34]

A. Learners discover facts about themselves, other people, society, and their relationship to society and to other people.

We stated earlier that the resources in the classroom should be familiar and potentially meaningful to the children. Both for learning experiences in which the focus is the ethnicity and culture of the children and for experiences in which children acquire academic skills, the teacher should provide activities, role models, and such materials as photographs, music, and artifacts that reflect the children's cultures.

The classroom should reflect the children's own cultures.

As a basis for learning to interact democratically, children must also learn about other ethnic and cultural groups. Multiethnic educational programs have often approached this objective by providing opportunities for children to eat foods, hear music, and learn dances from many cultures. However, people have not subordinated other people or resisted acquaintance because of food, music, or dance. A classroom that seeks to support cultural pluralism must offer experiences related to authentic interactions among groups of people (i.e., interactions that evolve out of real rather than contrived situations; in which groups gather to create something needed by all; in which the environment is equally safe for all groups

The classroom should offer experiences related to authentic interactions among groups.

*Cultural Pluralism supports authentic interactions between groups of people.*

and leadership may emerge from any group depending on the situation). Children should have opportunities to see the points of view of different ethnic groups, ages, and sexes, and to interact on such real-life issues and concepts as the family, use of finances, recreation, and advertisements. By showing different ways of doing things and different solutions to problems, such learning experiences will expand the students' problem-solving abilities.

Children should learn about different groups' views of issues and concepts, and about different ways of solving problems.

At an early age, children discover either that they belong to a group that is subordinated on the basis of ethnicity or socio-economic status, or that they do not. In either case, children should be supported in acknowledging and accepting their group identity. Individuals who have realistic views of themselves and of the way they are perceived are better able to work for their own survival or to assist others in working for their survival. Children of oppressed groups should be guided to focus on repudiating their subordination. Teachers should work with families to identify and help children develop appropriate survival skills. Such skills may include both abilities and knowledge. For example, in some communities it may be necessary for children who speak a dialect to learn standard English. In addition, the children must be helped to understand that they must learn a different way of saying things because some people have not learned to value the language of their culture, and they should know that concerned adults are working to eradicate the denigrating attitudes. In some situations, they may also work with adults to bring about reform.

Children should be supported in acknowledging their group identity.

Teachers should guide children to develop skills and attitudes appropriate for their own survival or assisting the survival of others.

Children of groups that are not oppressed should be guided to develop attitudes and skills that will enable them to become intentional agents for change. They should learn about the roots and forms of racism and oppression, discard stereotypes, and learn about reforming oppressive conditions. For example, it has been shown that white second-grade children have developed more positive attitudes toward Black people after reading children's storybooks that depict Black people in positive ways.[35]

B. Learners experience strategies for cooperation within groups, cooperation and competition* among groups, and effecting social change.

*Competition is not discussed here because this strategy is a part of the traditional school experience.

People naturally tend to form groups with others like themselves for comfort, familiarity, security, and protection, especially when in an indifferent or hostile environment. The teacher can help children learn about cooperation within groups by providing them with opportunities to 1) discover ways of identifying similarities between themselves and others; 2) work in groups and teams; 3) learn how to choose a group; and 4) determine when it is appropriate to participate in a group. A sense of community in classrooms can be promoted when individuals or groups interact with others to share or build. As children learn independently and teach others, they develop the skills and attitudes necessary for cooperation. Cooperation and a sense of community move beyond the classroom as the classroom community contributes to and receives from the rest of the school and the neighborhood.

Interdependent learning promotes cooperation and a sense of community.

Working with a group can be an important strategy for solving problems related to real issues that affect the lives of the children and their families as well as the classroom community. From studies of groups, we know that the interaction of individual minds can produce a collective consciousness, or synergy, that is greater than the total of the individual elements.[36] In addition, a group provides a supportive environment for attitudinal change and risk taking, which are important to the development of culturally pluralistic attitudes and skills. Members of a group can use their synergy constructively, either as a group or in coalition with other groups, to analyze and work to reform inhumane and unjust situations. In a 1971 publication, the National Council for Social Studies stresses the need for student involvement in social change:

Working within a group or coalition of groups promotes productive analysis of and action to solve social problems.

> "Extensive involvement by students of all ages in the activities of their community is...essential. Many of these activities may be in problem areas held, at least by some, to be controversial; many will not be. The involvement may take the form of observation or information-seeking; such as field trips, attending meetings, and interviews. It may take on the form of political campaigning, community service or improvement, or even responsible demonstration. The school should not only provide channels for such activities, but build them into the design of its social studies program, kindergarten through grade twelve."[37]

Students can participate in social action in many ways. It is important to note, however, that students alone will not solve problems of racism. They can contribute to a more positive social atmosphere. Since the school is an institution that is often oppressive, it is a good mirror of society upon which to practice. Students should have experience in shaping policy in the classroom and the school.

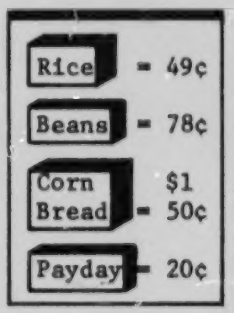
The following description of part of a classroom experience provides an example of ways of implementing some aspects of the first two objectives for learning experiences.

A Classroom Example

Children work interdependently in groups.

The teacher sits down with a group of children. On the wall behind the children are posted charts made by the children that list grocery items and prices. Three of the charts read as follows:

| Shopping List | |
|---|---|
| Bean Sprouts | .19 |
| Carrots | .50 |
| Peanut Butter | 1.00 |
| 1 pkg. ground beef | 1.28 |
| | 2.97 |




2 packs baloney

Spent two dollars and ninety-seven cents.

The money's all gone.

The teacher comments, "I see that some of you chose the foods you'd like and found out how much they'd cost. Tell me, what happened when you went to the store?" Two of the children share their experiences.

The teacher models and guides acceptance of differences and identification of appropriate uses of different approaches.

The teacher then turns to the children's shopping lists and asks, "In what ways is your chart similar to the others and how is it different?" Several children respond. "Fred, how might you change your chart if you wanted to make it look the same as Anthony's?" Fred answers and Anthony describes the change he could make.

The teacher asks, "In what situation might one kind of chart be more useful than another?" The children don't seem to understand the question. He asks a different question, "When have you seen charts like this one?" The teacher points to each chart. "The first one is good for a shopping list, you can

add it." "The next one looks like a poster in the store." "The third one is okay for sharing information with someone, for example, when you're writing a note at home."

Then Sam comments, "I didn't get my chart made because when Ma and I went to the store, we discovered that lots of the meat was spoilt. Ma got so mad, we left. She said we was boycottin' that store." All the children turn to Sam. The adult asks, "Which store did you go to?" When Sam answers, the teacher shakes his head and says, "Oh, yes, I know that store. They always have poor quality food." Sarah says, "Maybe we should write them a letter. What else is your Ma goin' to do besides boycott?" Sam answers, "Nuthin'." The teacher says, "That's a good idea, Sarah. Maybe they'd at least know why some of us are not going to purchase food there. I think I'll bring that up at the next community meeting. I'm sick of that store. How many of you want to write a letter when we're finished with this lesson?" Four of the children raise their hands. The fifth says she has something else to do.

A child identifies an issue relevant to the local community.

A child suggests a strategy for social reform.

The teacher uses and builds on the children's ideas.

C. Learners generate and integrate ideas about group living in relationship to their own daily experience.

In the previous example, the teacher asked open-ended questions that guided the children to discover and relate to their everyday experience new facts and concepts. Freire suggests that this problem-posing process is a meaningful way of enabling learners to gain a clearer understanding of the world and their relationship to it. In this process, learners in a group setting produce and act upon their own ideas in response to a problem posed by a teacher or one of the learners. The stimulus emerges from the learners' everyday experience (e.g., photographs, role-playing, a described experience, open-ended stories). The learning process is open; the teacher becomes a partner with the learners in a quest for discovery. The nature of the interaction provides a basis for commitment to and cooperation toward action. Not all problem-posing experiences will require direct action, however; some evolve into statements of desires to help others to become aware or proposals of ways to do so. The group interaction around a common concern aids in unifying the group, and provides opportunities for participation in a variety of roles (e.g., leader, follower, interactor, evaluator).

The problem-posing process is one way for learners to generate and integrate ideas about social concerns and interests. These ideas may become the basis for further study and actions, or they may be concluded with predictions, hypotheses, or fantasy.

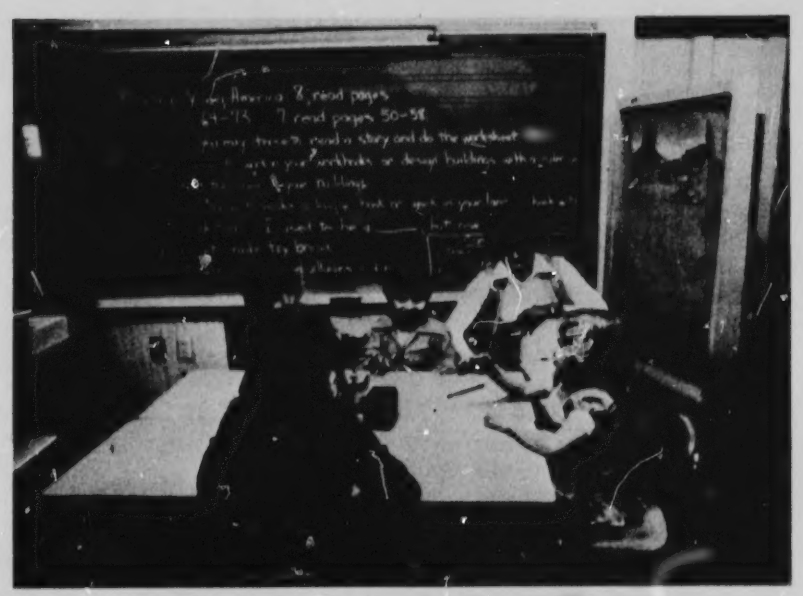
This process is particularly useful in guiding children to clarify their understanding of more difficult social concepts. The following description of a classroom experience provides an example of the process of generating and integrating ideas about group living.

A Classroom Example

A child is describing to a group a book he has read: "It was a story about some boys who wanted to go swimming and one boy tied the boy's clothes up and wouldn't play with him because he was Black."

"An' the others wouldn't play with him 'cause he was sunburnt and red?" asks Janice. "Do people really look red when they sunburned? No!" states Roy. "I would have zapped them if it'd been me," Deno says.

The teacher, Mrs. Montgomery, comments, "You would have been angry and wanted to fight." "Yah, I would have popped him like this--pow, pow!" Deno flings his fist in the air. "What did he do that would make you angry?" asks Mrs. Montgomery. "He tied the shirts up," Tony says furiously. "Why did he tie the shirts up?" asks the teacher.



*Teachers and learners pose problems that help learners clarify and evaluate aspects of group living.*

Georgia slowly exclaims, "'Cause he prejudice." "Prejudice? What is prejudice?" asks the teacher. "You know, that what some people say when people say what he did."

"What does prejudice mean?" Mrs. Montgomery pushes on. "I don't know." All the children shake their heads. Mrs. Montgomery questions, "What does judging mean?" "It's like when you judge a dog show," Ahlee comments.

Mrs. Montgomery continues, "What happens when you judge a dog show?" Ahlee says, "The judge decides which is good and which is best." "Oh, so judging is deciding what is good. What is the judge doing?" asks the teacher.

"He's thinking," Fred chimes in. "He is thinking." Mrs. Montgomery nods her head in affirmation. "What would happen if the judge thinks and then decides which dog is best before the show began?"

Problems posed by the teacher and the children enable the children to generate and integrate ideas about group living.

"That's not fair!!" several children respond together. "Naw, the other dogs wouldn't have a chance." Mrs. Montgomery says, "That would be pre-judging. Making a decision before you know all the facts." "That's cheatin'," Georgia states.

"That's what prejudice is, forming opinions without knowing facts." Mrs. Montgomery pauses, then says, "Was the boy in the story prejudiced?"

"Yah, he didn't know the Black boys 'n' he didn't want to play with them," answers Janice. "Have any of you ever had that happen to you?" Mrs. Montgomery asks.

"No. If they did it to me, I'd do it back to them!" says Deno. "If Shaun did it to me, I'd be mad," Fred comments. "Has Shaun ever done that to you?" Ahlee asks Fred. "No, he wouldn't do that," Fred answers.

Then Shaun announces, "My brother said I ate some candy of his when I didn't. He was prejudiced." Mrs. Montgomery asks, "Why do you suppose he thought you ate it?" "'Cause I used to," Shaun responded with a grin. "In that case, he seemed to have used facts to form that opinion even if his conclusion wasn't right," says the teacher.

Ahlee summarizes, "Maybe if the boy in the story had facts about the two Black boys, he'd have been their friend."

## Summary: A Statement of Student Rights

The elements of an equitable classroom climate and learning experiences that socialize for cultural pluralism can be summarized into a statement of student rights. We submit that the problems identified at the beginning of this chapter are reduced when students have the right to:[38]

A statement of student rights summarizes the elements of an equitable classroom climate and learning experiences that socialize for cultural pluralism.

1. Learn basic concepts and skills in their primary language.

2. Find personal meaning and representation via the integration of multiethnic materials, concepts, and points of view in daily learning experiences.

3. Have teachers who respect their ethnicity, appearance, dress, and way of behaving, and evaluate excellence according to the norms of their culture and community.

4. Have teachers who practice equity and guide their adults and children to eliminate demeaning myths, stereotypes, and prejudices about ethnic and cultural groups.

5. Learn facts from a pluralistic perspective by being exposed to a multiethnic curriculum and a multiethnic school staff.

6. Develop a realistic self-concept by learning about their own ethnicity and situation in society and their relationship to the ethnicity and situations of others.

7. Examine familiar situations and institutions for inequities and, when appropriate, work with others to make thoughtful decisions and effect change.

8. Learn survival skills appropriate to their own community and/or learn how to support the survival of others.

9. Participate in heterogeneous grouping.

10. Be evaluated for learning potential, and potential for success in society, in culturally appropriate ways and as a multidimensional being.

## Conclusion

Cultural pluralism is the socializing strategy that teachers adopt in Responsive classrooms because it represents the democratic values of our society. It inherently supports individuals and groups of people who have been oppressed by the traditional socializing strategies of the schools. We contend that cultural pluralism is effective and efficient for society as a whole because it affirms the potential of all citizens as productive resources. We believe that this strategy is desirable for individuals and the groups to which they belong because it focuses upon human need, human caring and warmth, the unique contribution of each individual and group, and self-determination and self-affirmation.

Cultural pluralism in schools benefits society and individuals and groups within society.

We must put our goal of cultural pluralism in a realistic context. We envision that classrooms that support pluralism bring a moment of the future into our present reality. Children are developing skills that they can use in their present world and that we believe will promote productive change and interaction in the future. We believe that teachers, staff developers, and parents should become aware of inequity and its historic roots in order to avoid intentional or unintentional acts that demean and harm others, and to find ways of reforming such situations.

Schools cannot eliminate all inequity in society, but can provide a glimpse of the future.

We can not expect, however, that some solutions will eliminate the entire problem. We know that cultural pluralism in the classroom alone will not create an equitable society. It does help children and adults get a glimmer of what a culturally pluralistic, or democratic, society can be.

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# 6 LEARNER OBJECTIVES OF THE RESPONSIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM

## Introduction

The Responsive Education Program has three goals that are long-range and humanistic in nature. Each of the three goals has a set of objectives that specify shorter-range learner outcomes. Like the goals, the sets of objectives support each other and overlap.

The program has three goals that are long-range and humanistic. Each has a set of learner objectives.

In this chapter, we discuss the objectives of the Responsive Education Program. We begin with a brief definition of goals and objectives. Part II describes the three goals of the program, and Part III discusses the objectives and their relationship to one another. Part IV provides two illustrations of the objectives in operation--one an illustration of a classroom situation and the other an illustration of a situation outside the classroom.

## I. A Brief Definition of Educational Goals and Objectives

An educational goal is an end that one strives to attain. It is generally long-range and broad in scope. It can be so broad that it cannot be accomplished in a school year or, in some instances, an even longer period such as the duration of high school. Educational goals differ from objectives in that objectives tend to be shorter-range and narrower in scope. Objectives can be accomplished in a short period of time--a day, week, month, or year. They are ways of seeing that learners are moving toward goals. Because children constantly meet new challenges and situations as they progress through school, objectives may need to be newly supported and reinforced over a period of time.

Objectives are shorter-range than goals.

Educational programs set long-range goals for the education of children and then develop more specific objectives that are expected to be met within a school year or period of several years. For example, a school district may set as a goal that all children will be able to read by the completion of elementary school. The objectives will be set to define when and how this will take place from year to year.

## II. The Goals of the Responsive Education Program

Arthur Combs, a professor of educational psychology at the University of Florida, has distinguished humanistic goals and objectives from behavioral objectives.

Humanistic goals are holistic.

Humanistic goals have to do with the affective and social as well as the cognitive domain of learning. They are holistic in nature, encompassing such matters as intelligence, problem-solving behavior, creativity, adaptability, responsibility for self and others, self-actualization, feelings of identification, values, attitudes, and the discovery of personal meaning.

He calls them humanistic because they are directed to the qualities that make us human--"internal states like feelings, attitudes, beliefs, understandings, perceptions." These are matters of personal meaning to the individual. They are internal experiences that can only be suggested by some external behavior.

The program's goals are directed to the development of self-determining, self-aware, and socially conscious adults.

The Responsive Education Program's three goals are humanistic. They are long-range, broad statements of what we believe to be valuable, essential, internal behaviors for the development of self-determining, self-aware, and socially conscious adults. We state these goals in capsulized form below.*

1. Cognitive Growth. Learners develop problem-solving abilities.

2. Affective Growth. Learners develop healthy self-concepts.

3. Social Growth. Learners develop culturally pluralistic attitudes and behaviors.

Children will be moving toward these goals at different rates during the early-childhood years. Establishing the groundwork or foundation for the achievement of these goals is the major aim during this period. The learner is continually learning, developing, and becoming, in the school setting and in the larger community as well.

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*For detailed discussions of the goals, see Chapter 3, "Cognitive Development in the Responsive Education Program"; Chapter 4, "Healthy Self-Concept in the Responsive Education Program"; and Chapter 5, "Cultural Pluralism in the Responsive Education Program."

These goals have evolved for us as central to the education of young children for three reasons.

1) The development of cognitive abilities is essential to the healthy and total development of children. Individuals who know how to solve problems effectively and appropriately and then use these abilities to obtain knowledge and skills relevant to their needs and interests are self-determining. The development of cognitive abilities is paramount to all learning and therefore must be the goal of any educational effort.

2) Children's self-concepts are the result of their knowledge and feelings about themselves, their family, their abilities, their physical appearance, their community, and so forth. All children form concepts about themselves, whether positive or negative, realistic or exaggerated. Children's ability to learn is affected by their concept of themselves as a learner. Children who believe themselves to be capable learners are more willing to take appropriate risks, make decisions, and try new and different experiences that result in learning. It is important that children have a realistic view of themselves that promotes their feeling capable of learning and willing to learn from success and failure.

3) The human being is a social animal. Most environments constantly force individuals to interact with others, both like and unlike themselves. In order to develop fully and become effective and productive contributors to society, individuals must be able and willing to accept and respect similarities and differences among people and to work toward eradicating inhumane treatment of themselves and others. Individuals who do not have these abilities will find it difficult to survive in today's society that more and more stresses equity for all people.

These goals have evolved from our belief in a humanistic philosophy. We consider them logical goals for the implementation of our program. We believe that the adults who have experienced this kind of education will be self-determining individuals with the capacity to understand and work harmoniously with others.

These goals are interrelated and complementary. They interact to contribute to the total development of the learner, and must be emphasized and reinforced simultaneously.

The three goals complement one another and interact.

The development of cognitive abilities helps a child develop and maintain a healthy self-concept, as the child uses such abilities to learn about and understand himself or herself. A healthy self-concept and the ability to take pluralistic perspectives increases a learner's ability to solve problems effectively and appropriately. Cognitive abilities and a healthy self-concept together support the development of culturally pluralistic attitudes and behaviors. The behaviors and concepts develop simultaneously. For instance, a child who is faced with a mathematics problem is better able to solve it if she feels confident in meeting challenges by evaluating them and deciding whether to solve them by using her own resources or by asking for help. Using her own resources and those of others is pluralism in practice; the learner is able to value herself (and thus act on her own behalf) and value others (and thus act on their behalf).

## III. Learner Objectives

Each goal has learner objectives that are also humanistic. They express desired outcomes that teachers work toward.

Each of our program's educational goals contains specific objectives that are also humanistic. We call these objectives learner objectives because they define behaviors that learners can exhibit that express part of the goal. (For example, the ability to gather needed information contributes to the larger cognitive goal of being able to solve problems effectively and appropriately.) The learner objectives are narrower than the goals. They can be long-range as well as short-range. It is easier to see immediate results of objectives than of goals. Learner objectives can be thought of as milestones towards the attainment of a goal.

Each goal's objectives express desired outcomes for the child. These more specific outcomes are what teachers and other classroom adults work toward. They individualize the objectives appropriately for each child and each classroom.

The learner objectives for each goal are listed on the following page.

## Learner Objectives for Responsive Education Program Goals

The objectives for the development of problem-solving abilities are that learners:

1. Take initiative in formulating and addressing questions or problems in need of resolution.

2. Use problem-solving processes to acquire academic skills, and use these skills and other abilities to gather information, generate ideas, and evaluate ideas for effective and appropriate solutions.

3. Act to solve problems effectively and appropriately.

*"Express feelings authentically and appropriately."*

The objectives for the development of healthy self-concept are that learners:

1. Use their own ideas and values.

2. Work effectively within limits and draw on available resources when solving problems.

3. Express feelings authentically and appropriately.

4. Acknowledge their strengths and weaknesses, take credit for their accomplishments, and give others credit for their accomplishments.

The objectives for the development of culturally pluralistic attitudes and behaviors are that learners:

1. Know about their ethnic/cultural group and like and contribute to their ethnic/cultural group.

2. Know about other ethnic/cultural groups and respect and interact productively with people of other ethnic and cultural groups.

3. Know about their own and others' relationship to society and work with others to uphold human rights and achieve social justice.

Like the goals, the learner objectives interact.

Like the goals, the learner objectives are interrelated; several objectives can be reached through the same activity. They support each other and support the broader goals as well. They interact in the same way as the goals, but in more specific terms. Figure 1 below illustrates this interaction by showing how an objective for one goal is related to the other two goals and their objectives.

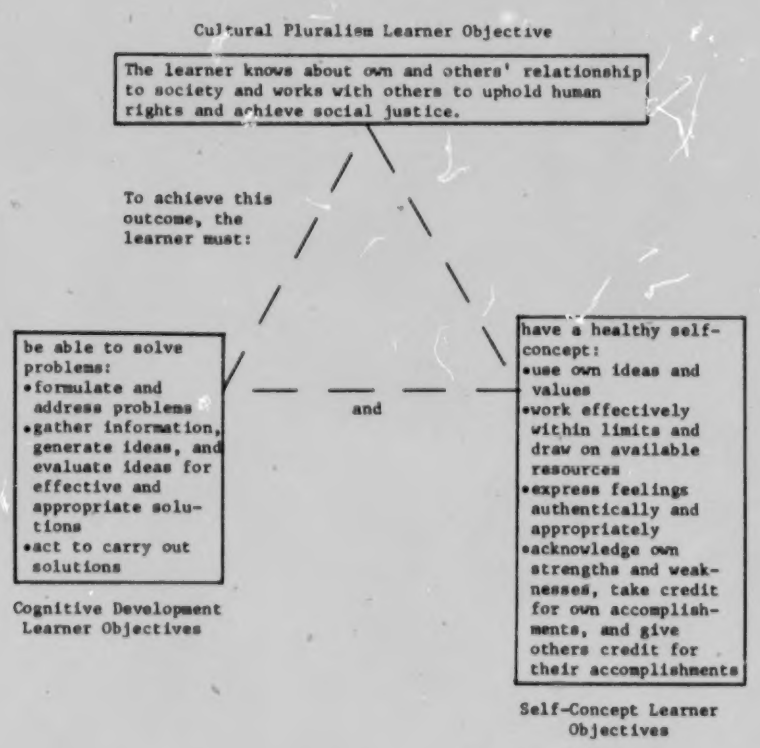
Cultural Pluralism Learner Objective
The learner knows about own and others' relationship to society and works with others to uphold human rights and achieve social justice.
To achieve this outcome, the learner must:
be able to solve problems:
•formulate and address problems
•gather information, generate ideas, and evaluate ideas for effective and appropriate solutions
•act to carry out solutions
Cognitive Development Learner Objectives
and
have a healthy self-concept:
•use own ideas and values
•work effectively within limits and draw on available resources
•express feelings authentically and appropriately
•acknowledge own strengths and weaknesses, take credit for own accomplishments, and give others credit for their accomplishments
Self-Concept Learner Objectives

Figure 1. Interaction among Learner Objectives

The triangle linking the objectives shows that objectives for all three goals are used and reinforced. If the triangle were turned to put an objective for a different goal at the top, the objectives for the other two goals would still support whatever objective was at the top.

The following example of a learning experience illustrates how this interaction takes place in the classroom.

| Initial Experience | Cognitive Development Objectives | Self-Concept Objectives | Cultural Pluralism Objectives |
|---|---|---|---|
| A child sees a movie in which Native Americans attack white settlers and the settlers fight back. The child tells the teacher one day when they are studying the settlement of the western states that he does not like Indians because they always kill everybody. Teacher poses questions to help the child analyze his assumptions without imposing her opinion on the child. | The child begins to ask questions and gather information. E. g., Why were the Indians attacking the settlers? Do people attack other people without a reason? Why were the settlers there? Why did the settlers feel the way they did? | Child relates this information to what he knows about himself. E.g., What are the reasons why I fight or argue with someone? What would I do if I were attacked? How would I feel if I were new to a community? How would I feel if someone new moved to my block? | Child relates the new information to what he knows about Native Americans' relationship to society. E.g., What happened to Indians in the past? What is happening to Indians today? Do I have all of the facts? Why is it important to hear both sides of a story? |

Our objectives allow the learner to be flexible and creative. They are open-ended and support our belief that learning should be productive, fun, and relevant to the learner. They can be attained to some degree by every child in his or her own way and at his or her own pace. They can be personalized for each child because they do not pinpoint or force specific skill or content development within a specified time. They emphasize utilization of a learning process that can be transferred to any situation (e.g., acquiring an academic skill; solving an affective problem). They are based on a realistic view of the survival needs of an effectively functioning human being. We believe that children who are allowed to make choices and make decisions about their own learning may be more committed to learn.

The objectives emphasize an approach to learning that can be transferred to any situation.

## IV. Learner Objectives in Operation

Successful accomplishment of the goals and objectives requires certain conditions in the learning environment, and that the learning be relevant to the children's real-world experiences.

*"Act to solve problems effectively and appropriately."*

Successful accomplishment of the goals and objectives requires a learning environment that supports productive, child-centered learning.

It also requires that skills and content be relevant to children's experience outside the classroom.

The learning environment must be such that it supports productive, child-centered learning. It must provide appropriate opportunities and support for the development of problem-solving abilities, for the development of healthy self-concept, and of culturally pluralistic attitudes and behaviors.*

Once the conditions are adequate and stable, we are ready to focus on the content of the learning. The skills and curriculum content that children learn in the classroom must be real and useful to them in the world outside the classroom. If what is learned in school is so foreign to the children's out-of-school experiences that they cannot make connections, generalizations, and applications, the learning will be relevant only to their school experiences. It will not be relevant to their growth and functioning in their real-life environment. When children gain knowledge and learn skills that are related to their productive learning outside of school as well as in school, they will be better able to make generalizations, make transferences from past experiences, and

*For further discussion of the conditions of the learning environment, see Chapter 7, "Principles and Teaching Guidelines of the Responsive Education Program."

draw from their repertoire of problem-solving strategies to apply their knowledge to almost any situation or encounter.

## A Classroom Illustration

The anecdote that begins on the next page illustrates learning taking place that enables the children to acquire new skills in the context of a familiar, real-life situation. It also illustrates how the learner objectives can be supported simultaneously in one activity.

*"Children interact productively with people of other ethnic and cultural groups."*

## Learner Objectives in Practice in a Classroom Situation

| Classroom Situation | Cognitive Development Objectives | Self-Concept Objectives | Cultural Pluralism Objectives |
|---|---|---|---|
| The teacher and children have set up a section of the classroom as a small grocery store.<br><br>The teacher presents a problem situation to the children. The problem: A child has been sent to the store by his mother to buy some grocery items, but he can't find all of them in the store. The store keeper is out and his grandfather (who does not speak or read English) is watching the store. The child can't go home without all the items. What can he do to solve his problem?<br><br>The children break up into teams of three to work on the solution and to try it out in the grocery store. They brainstorm about what the problem really is and what they know about the situation.<br><br>In one group, Joe says, "It sure would be easier if he could at least read English. Why would they leave him in there if he can't even understand nobody."<br><br>John says, "He can understand people who talk like he does." "Yeah, but he don't understand us and we don't understand him either! How do we help him understand us?" asks Kate. | Learners address the problem.<br><br>Learners formulate questions. They use a variety of abilities to gather information.<br><br>Learners generate and evaluate ideas. | Learner uses own ideas and values.<br><br>Learner expresses feelings authentically. | Learners work productively with others. |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| John asks, "Do you know anyone who does not speak English?"<br><br>Kate says, "Yeah. Marilyn's grandmother don't speak nothin' but Spanish."<br><br>"How do you talk to her?" asks Joe.<br><br>"That's easy," says Kate, "Marilyn helps me say some things to her grandmother in Spanish, and I like to listen to her talk to Marilyn and me. Marilyn tells me later what they are saying to each other. I learn a lot of her words that way, but I sure couldn't understand her without Marilyn."<br><br>Joe says, "We don't have that long to wait. What do we do now?"<br><br>Kate says, "We could wait until the store man gets back."<br><br>John says, "That might take days and days."<br><br>Kate says, "Yeah, and if we stand around a long time, he might get scared of us."<br><br>John says, "I got it! Kate can find someone who understands Grandfather AND English ...Joe can wait for the store man to get back and I can go and find some empty cans and pictures of the stuff and show that to him. Whoever gets back first can buy the stuff."<br><br>Kate says, 'Wow! That's a good idea, Johnny." | Learners gather information.<br><br>Learners generate and evaluate ideas.<br><br>Learners choose effective and appropriate solutions. | Learner works effectively within limits and draws on available resources.<br><br>Learners take credit for own accomplishments and give others credit for their accomplishments.<br><br>Learner works effectively within limits. | Learner knows about other ethnic groups.<br><br>Learner respects and interacts productively with people of other ethnic groups. |

Learner Objectives in Practice in a Classroom Situation

| Classroom Situation | Cognitive Development Objectives | Self-Concept Objectives | Cultural Pluralism Objectives |
|---|---|---|---|
| Joe says, "Yeah, John man, that's out-a-sight. That way we cover all the bases." | | Learners give credit to others. | |
| John smiles and shakes his head in agreement. | | Learner takes credit for accomplishments. | |
| They go to the teacher to describe their plan and tell how they came up with it. | | | |
| They decide to try it out in the grocery store by getting another child to play the grandfather. | Learners act to solve problems. | | |
| Later they share their solutions with others in the class by writing what they did and why (or by dictating it to a teacher if they can't write) and then reading it to each other and others in the class. They also hear the ways in which others sought solutions. | Learners gather information, generate ideas, and evaluate ideas. | Learners take credit for their own accomplishments, and give others credit for their accomplishments. | Learners respect and interact productively with others. |

The way the children in the previous anecdote approached the solution to the problem is an example of learning being relevant to children's real-world experiences. The teacher sets up the problem for the children. The children approached the problem with the goal of solving it because it was an assigned task, rather than a problem they needed or wanted to solve for themselves. Once they began to solve the problem, the children made it real for themselves by bringing their own experience to bear on the problem. They made connections between the problem and similar situations they had encountered outside of school.

In the classroom situation just described, children brought their out-of-school experiences to bear on the problem.

> John asks, "Do you know anyone who does not speak English?" Kate says, "Yeah. Marilyn's grandmother don't speak nothin' but Spanish."
>
> "How do you talk to her?" asks Joe. "That's easy," says Kate, "Marilyn helps me say some things to her grandmother in Spanish, and I like to listen to her talk to Marilyn and me..."

Children's school experiences take up half their daily living. However, children learn and grow when they are not in school. Their after-school and weekend experiences are as real and valuable to their education as their school experiences. It is during this period that children must apply what they have learned. They must be able to solve real-world problems using their cognitive abilities. They must have confidence and faith in themselves to use their acquired skills to make appropriate decisions. They must be able to perceive and respect similarities and differences between situations and people in order to be open and flexible enough to work towards a problem solution.

Illustration of a Situation Outside the Classroom

The following anecdote illustrates a problem situation that takes place outside of school but could very easily occur in the classroom. The child has to use his reasoning skills, and his respect for himself and others to solve the problem. It is an example of how our goals and objectives function outside of the classroom.

## Learner Objectives in Practice in a Situation Outside the Classroom

| Situation Outside the Classroom | Cognitive Development Objectives | Self-Concept Objectives | Cultural Pluralism Objectives |
|---|---|---|---|
| Marcus is playing marbles with some friends outside his house. One of the boys decides he is tired of playing and suggests they go to a park about three blocks away. Marcus' mother has told him to stay home until she gets back.<br><br>Marcus says he can't go. The boys tell him they can all go and be back before his mother gets back.<br><br>Marcus thinks about it. He really wants to go, but he also does not want to get into trouble with his mother. If he goes and she finds out, she'll be mad and will get a babysitter next time she leaves. He remembers that he promised her he would not lie to her again. He decides he is going to keep his promise. So he tells the boys he can't go. They tease him and call him a "mom's boy" and "chicken."<br><br>Marcus tells them that he doesn't like it and to stop. He tells them that he doesn't want to lie to his mom because he promised her he wouldn't; and that's why he's not going. | Learner addresses the problem; gathers (recalls) information, generates ideas; and chooses a solution. | Learner works effectively within limits.<br><br>Learners express feelings and use own ideas and values.<br><br>Learner expresses feelings and uses own ideas and values. | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| One boy says, "Your mom won't find out, man. You always spoil everything!"<br><br>Marcus tells them that they can go without him if they like.<br><br>Nobody moves. Marcus says, "I want to go, but if we don't get back in time, Momma will be mad and I'm not gonna lie!"<br><br>One boy says, "Yeah, my dad has a fit if I lie to him. I really get it."<br><br>Another says, "I left home once when I wasn't 'pose to and man, when my momma found out, I really got it."<br><br>Another one says, "Well, we could play some more marbles 'til ya momma gets home."<br><br>Everybody frowns! They sit staring at the ground.<br><br>Then Marcus jumps up and says loudly, "I got it. I'll call my Aunt Clara and ask her if I can go if I leave a note on the door for Momma and we promise not to stay long."<br><br>Everybody says, "That's it, far out."<br><br>Marcus says, "I knew I could think of somethin'," and went to make his call. | Learners gather information and generate and evaluate ideas<br><br>Learner acts to solve problem effectively and appropriately. | Learner uses own values; works effectively within limits; and expresses authentic feelings. | Learner respects others.<br><br>Learners work productively with others. |

All the goals of Responsive education were enhanced in this one episode in a young child's life. The child's self-concept was reinforced, he applied his cognitive abilities, and the others gained a deeper respect for human dignity and worth. This was indeed a Responsive experience.

In the situation just described, the child's self-concept was reinforced, he applied his cognitive abilities, and the others gained a deeper respect for human dignity.

Young children are always involved in many activities. Each activity offers the potential for meeting Responsive objectives. A sensitive adult can observe these objectives being met in classroom and out-of-classroom experiences. The Responsive teacher's task is to build opportunities into ongoing activities that enhance possibilities for children to work on meeting a broad range of objectives. The adult helps learners see that they are working on and meeting the objectives. And he or she plans, observes, records, and assesses their growth toward attainment of a combination of several objectives within any experience.

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# 7 PRINCIPLES AND TEACHING GUIDELINES OF THE RESPONSIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM

## Introduction

How do teachers go about providing a learning environment that helps learners develop toward the goals and learner objectives of the Responsive Education Program? This chapter addresses this question by discussing four principles or characteristics of a learning environment that supports productive, child-centered learning and three related guidelines for Responsive teaching.

The three goals of the program--supporting cognitive growth by promoting the development of problem-solving abilities, supporting affective growth by promoting the development of healthy self-concept, and supporting social growth by promoting the development of culturally pluralistic attitudes and behaviors--each specify certain conditions of a learning environment that supports that goal.* These conditions can be synthesized into the four statements of Responsive principles. The principles in turn give rise to the three teaching guidelines. Figure 1 on the next page summarizes the conditions specified for each goal, and shows how these conditions lead to the principles and to the guidelines.

The three goals of the program specify certain conditions of the learning environment. These conditions lead to Responsive principles and teaching guidelines.

Part I of this chapter discusses the Responsive principles, and Part II discusses the guidelines. Part III illustrates the implementation of the principles and guidelines by describing an episode in a Responsive classroom. Part IV describes the theoretical basis of the principles.

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*For discussion of the conditions and the rationales for them, see Chapter 3, "Cognitive Development in the Responsive Education Program"; Chapter 4, "Healthy Self-Concept in the Responsive Education Program"; and Chapter 5, "Cultural Pluralism in the Responsive Education Program." For discussion of the learner objectives associated with each goal, see Chapter 6, "Learner Objectives of the Responsive Education Program."

Responsive principles arise from the conditions of the environment created by teachers as they implement Responsive goals and objectives.

**CONDITIONS OF THE ENVIRONMENT**

| COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT | SELF-CONCEPT | CULTURAL PLURALISM |
|---|---|---|
| Adults:<br>• gain and use pertinent information about the learners<br>• provision an interesting and meaningful environment<br>• model an inquiring mind<br>• interact with learners to stimulate independent thought and problem-solving behaviors<br>to support learners in using their own ways and learning new ways of experiencing, integrating, and applying. | Adults enable learners to experience:<br>• acceptance of their values, ideas, feelings, and interests<br>• freedom to make choices and decisions within clear, consistent limits<br>• clear standards by which they can judge their behavior and the results of their efforts<br>• opportunities for integrating what they have learned and taking credit. | Adults provide equitable opportunities for learning.<br>Adults provide learning experiences that socialize for culturally pluralistic skills and attitudes and an interdependent community:<br>• Learners discover facts about themselves, about others, and about their own and others' relationship to society.<br>• Learners experience strategies for cooperation within groups, cooperation and competition among groups, and effecting social change.<br>• Learners generate and integrate ideas about group living in relationship to their own daily experience. |

**RESPONSIVE PRINCIPLES**

The learners' experience, backgrounds, and interests are assets.

Learners develop increasing responsibility for and control of their own learning.

Learners acquire skills and concepts in the context of meaningful, integrated learning experiences.

Learners share knowledge and experience and interact on issues.

**GUIDELINES FOR RESPONSIVE TEACHING**

The teachers gain information about and understanding of the learners by observing, listening, and questioning perceptively.

The teachers use the information gathered to create learning experiences that are reality-based, logical, and pluralistic.

The teachers develop an interdependent community of learners by modeling, guiding, and supporting positive peer-group interactions on real-world issues.

Figure 1. Conditions of the Learning Environment, Responsive Principles, and Guidelines for Responsive Teaching.

## I. Responsive Principles

Responsive principles describe conditions of a Responsive environment.

Responsive principles are heuristic concepts that describe the conditions of a Responsive learning environment. These are conditions of an environment in which learners value themselves, others, and the outcomes of their personal and group work. Responsive principles provide the direction and focus for effective teaching structure and process. They are based on an integration of cognitive, affective, and social worlds in which learners develop cognitive abilities, healthy self-concepts, and equitable interpersonal relationships.

The principles are as follows:

1. The learners' experience, backgrounds, and interests are assets.

2. Learners develop increasing responsibility for and control of their own learning.

3. Learners acquire skills and concepts in the context of meaningful, integrated learning experiences.

4. Learners share knowledge and experience and interact on issues.

*The Electricity Center: Children take responsibility for their own learning, develop a variety of skills, and share knowledge.*

### 1. Learners' experience, backgrounds, and interests are assets.

Children bring to school already-formed ways of perceiving and organizing what they experience. They have already learned concepts and methods of solving problems from playing with children in their neighborhood and from their families. They bring diverse values, ways of doing things, concerns, and interests, acquired from their families, their ethnic and cultural groups, and their individual preferences.

Learners' assets are the foundation for learning.

All these skills and ideas are assets for learning. Children can use these assets if the classroom provides a variety of materials, activities, and individual and large-group settings from which they can choose. From working at their own level of development and using their own ideas, learners realize that they already have a whole battery of innate and acquired skills and information to draw on and enhance in new learning situations. They gain increasing appreciation of and confidence in themselves as individuals and as learners. This knowledge increases their desire to learn and their receptivity to new information and experiences. They also learn that their weaknesses and mistakes can become points of departure for learning experiences.

Taking credit for what one already knows increases one's motivation to learn more.

In addition to developing their cognitive abilities and self-confidence, children learn that there may be many ways of viewing a set of facts or solving a problem, and that individuals may have diverse values as to what is important (e.g., choice of stories, beliefs, styles of dress, way of speaking). Respect for individual differences contributes to the development of culturally pluralistic attitudes.

### 2. Learners develop increasing responsibility for and control of their own learning.

Responsibility for and control over one's own learning increases self-motivation, self-knowledge, and self-sufficiency.

When learners are able to explore and question freely, making their own decisions and choices, they become increasingly self-motivated and develop skills for becoming self-regulating individuals. By having some control over their learning, they become able to determine when they are willing to risk attempting something new. They learn to view themselves, their thoughts, and their actions realistically in terms of their goals, and to pace themselves and develop self-discipline in order to achieve an objective. They also develop the ability to use constructively the support, criticism, and clarification that they get from both adults and peers. The learners do not need

external rewards for their actions; the reward lies in the quest and discovery of whatever it is that they seek. They learn because they are interested and want to gain certain knowledge.

As the learners take an active role in developing their own learning, they begin to share the control of themselves, their actions, and goals with the teacher and peers. They become increasingly responsible. They also become independent thinkers, developing their abilities to reason and create. Their thoughts, feelings and actions are not only part of the curriculum, but are an integrated, functional part of themselves as well.

To support learners in the development of control and responsibility, the learning environment should be physically and psychologically safe. It should enable learners to feel safe in seeking and discovering; to have no fear of competition for which they are not ready or condemnation or ridicule of their ideas and actions; and to correct their own mistakes and learn from them. They should be able to select their own path of learning from among many variables, choose the interests they wish to pursue, and decide how to do so, with guidance and suggestions from the teacher and peers. The learners should decide which resources to use to find information and solutions. They should have opportunities to play different roles and to experience from different perspectives. For example, depending on the circumstances and on what is psychologically and cognitively necessary at the moment, a learner may choose to be a passive recipient, an observer, or an active agent. A learner may wish to relate to others reciprocally--sharing, strategizing, gaining understanding of another's perspective. The learner may also wish to take the role of a judge, assessing and evaluating himself and others.

The learning environment should enable learners to feel safe in taking risks and to choose their own path of learning.

3. Learners acquire skills and concepts in the context of meaningful, integrated learning experiences.

We believe that learning is most productive when it enables learners to do things in a way that more effectively gives them the results they want, or helps them see everyday things in a new way. In an environment that supports such learning, learners acquire skills and concepts through activities that, in themselves, hold meaning and interest for them. The experiences and situations from which they learn are either part of their world outside the classroom or drawn from and realistically modeled after real-life

Learning is most productive when learning experiences are meaningful and interesting, and present or simulate real-life situations.

situations. For example, children may acquire reading and writing skills as they write about what they did on the weekend or about something they like in their neighborhood. The skills of communication through language become meaningful when children learn that their personal experiences can be communicated to others.

Learning experiences based on real-life situations enable learners to acquire many skills and concepts, and transfer them to other situations.

Such experiences may often incorporate more than one basic skill. For example, a trip to the neighborhood store can be the common experience that can be the topic for writing, using mathematics and science concepts, and discussing social studies concepts. Because skills, materials, thoughts and actions are logically connected within the context of such an experience, learners can begin to understand how the different aspects combine to make the whole experience meaningful. Conversely, they become able to transfer parts of their learning to new situations. Thus the skills they are acquiring are immediately functional and can be transferred to similar situations wherever they occur. The learners' abilities to deduce and infer are developing. They become able to anticipate and predict, developing not only the skills and concepts themselves, but also the ability to use them productively.

4. Learners share knowledge and experience and interact on issues.

Sharing and interaction have synergistic effects and contribute to social consciousness.

When learners have opportunities to express themselves and communicate freely, they learn from and with each other. They find common, as well as individual, interests and goals. They hear different ideas and viewpoints and learn new ways of doing and experiencing. Different cultural characteristics are shared and appreciated. Those who have mastered certain tasks help those who are having difficulty; both learn more. Interaction is synergistic; combined efforts result in new products and perspectives that are different from what one individual could achieve alone.

Sharing differences and similarities creates a richer, multidimensional experience. It also stimulates understanding of and sensitivity to others' thoughts, feelings and motivations. These conditions contribute to the beginnings of development of social consciousness in children. Part of social consciousness is recognizing that we humans have prejudices of all kinds. Two of the most prevalent of these are racism and sexism. They can be countered in the classroom by the modeling of fairness by teachers and by

positive experiences in which children become aware of and respect similarities and differences between themselves and others.

As children share, they learn the rewards of giving and receiving, of combining efforts. They become aware of themselves as resources not only for themselves, but also the community and society as a whole.

## II. Guidelines for Responsive Teaching

The guidelines describe teacher behaviors that implement the Responsive principles (which are based on Responsive goals and objectives). The guidelines relate to what a teacher needs to know and do in order to arrange the environment, create learning experiences, and support interactions that meet the needs of learners in today's world. They are designed to help teachers plan and develop a Responsive learning environment.

The guidelines describe teacher behaviors that implement the Responsive principles.

Figure 2 below summarizes the three guidelines. Discussions of each guideline follow.

| ① | ② | ③ |
|---|---|---|
| The teacher gains information about and understanding of the learners by observing, listening, and questioning perceptively.<br><br>The information concerns:<br><br>•Primary language of the learners<br>•Ethnicity, culture, background, values of the learners<br>•Strengths of the learners<br>•Needs of the learners and of their world<br>•Developmental level of the learners<br>•Learning style of the learners<br>•Skill development of the learners<br>•Problems of the learners<br>•Ideas, feelings, and actions of the learners<br>•Interests of the learners. | The teacher uses the information gathered to create learning experiences that are reality-based, logical, and pluralistic.<br><br>The experiences and materials:<br><br>•Are familiar and relevant<br>•Provide a variety and range of options and resources (e.g., from concrete to abstract; from simple to complex; multiethnic)<br>•Provide for initiation of self-expression<br>•Use learners' interests as the base for skill development<br>•Provide freedom within clearly defined limits<br>•Provide for goal setting, assessment, and integration<br>•Provide a variety of perspectives on any issue. | The teacher develops an interdependent community of learners by modeling, guiding, and supporting positive peer-group interactions on real-world issues.<br><br>The peer-group interactions are related to:<br><br>•Raising of questions, issues, and problems to be solved<br>•Working on solutions to issues and tasks<br>•Goal setting, information gathering, sharing, assessing, and integrating<br>•Fair and respectful interactions with all groups<br>•Discussing myths and stereotypes. |

**Figure 2. Guidelines for Responsive Teaching.**

1. The teacher gains information about and understanding of the learners by observing, listening, and questioning perceptively.

The information concerns:

- Primary language of the learners
- Ethnicity, culture, background, values of the learners
- Strengths of the learners
- Needs of the learners and of their world
- Developmental level of the learners
- Learning style of the learners
- Skill development of the learners
- Problems of the learners
- Ideas, feelings, and actions of the learners
- Interests of the learners.

Teachers need to learn about learners in order to provide relevant materials and experiences.

Learning about learners is a primary responsibility of a teacher. The teacher gathers information by listening to, observing, and perceptively questioning the learners in the classroom and in their community. The learners' strengths, existing knowledge, and individual interests are richnesses that they can build upon in learning skills and concepts. A teacher needs to understand and respect the children's language, logic, values, family background, culture, and previous experience in order to provide relevant materials and experiences.

Attentive listening communicates support and acceptance.

Acts of "tuning in" to learners' thoughts, feelings, and actions reflect an attitude of caring and respect. In addition to gathering important information, the teacher communicates to children support and acceptance. Children feel more free to express themselves and gain confidence when they realize that they are important enough to warrant attention. Freeing children through active listening leads to growth and change, a sense of worth, independence, self-direction and strength. By such empathetic behavior, the teacher is relating to the children and their community in a way that shows openness and willingness to learn about learners.

2. The teacher uses the information gathered to create learning experiences that are reality-based, logical, and pluralistic.

The experiences and materials:

- Are familiar and relevant
- Provide a variety and range of options and resources (e.g., from concrete to abstract; from

simple to complex; multiethnic)
- Provide for initiation of self-expression
- Use learners' interests as the base for skill development
- Provide freedom within clearly defined limits
- Provide for goal setting, assessment, and integration
- Provide a variety of perspectives on any issue.

The experiences and materials should capture the learners' interest and broaden their world. By building on what learners bring to a learning situation, the teacher and the curriculum link learners' past experience, culture, ethnicity, learning style, feelings, and ideas to the classroom environment. Materials, literature, and activities should be free of stereotypes. The curriculum content should relate to the children's background, family, and familiar world. This approach does not exclude unfamiliar content; rather, learners are helped to see the connections between the familiar and the unfamiliar as they ask questions, experiment, solve problems, and construct their own knowledge.

Teachers use the information gathered about learners to build learning situations.

The learning situation must inherently stimulate excitement, curiosity, and thinking and be personally meaningful and appropriately challenging. The teacher should provide a variety of relevant, open-ended opportunities for exploration. Children learn from discovering for themselves rather than from being taught about something. The teacher should ask himself or herself such questions as, "Can the learners find their own relationship to this activity? Can they choose their own meaningful directions within the freedom and limits of our environment?" Integrated, whole experiences that are rooted in the children's real world enable children to become more aware of themselves as learners, of their relationship to other learners, and of what they want to find out.

Children learn through discovering for themselves.

Logical experiences and materials enable learners to predict ("What will happen if _____?") and to make deductions and inferences ("If I do _____, then _____ will probably happen."). Once they understand the logic inherent in an activity, learners can be responsible for working independently or with others to create their own strategies and experiments and take credit for their results.

Logical materials and experiences enable children to predict and reason.

Children should have reasonable freedom to risk (and make mistakes if necessary), and to find answers to their own problems, concerns and questions. A question is the first and most vital part of the

Children should have reasonable freedom to ask and seek answers to their own questions.

answer. For most of us, being given an "answer" is a meaningless process unless we have helped formulate or are interested in the question. When a person asks or is helped to ask his or her own question, that person is usually ready to work to find an answer.

If an adult always tells them the answer, children are not going to have many questions they want or need to explore. Children should have opportunities to set goals and use resources to reason through their own questions; to assess what works for them and what does not; and to integrate by deciding which of their questions are answered, which are not, and what more they need to do to find the answers they want. In such situations, children are taking increasing responsibility for their own learning.

3. The teacher develops an interdependent community of learners by modeling, guiding, and supporting peer-group interactions on real-world issues.

Peer-group interactions are related to:

- Raising of questions, issues, and problems to be solved
- Working on solutions to issues and tasks
- Goal setting, information gathering, sharing, assessing, and integrating
- Fair and respectful interactions with all groups
- Discussing myths and stereotypes.

As a member of the social group in the classroom, the teacher should raise some of his or her own questions, issues, and problems and proceed through the processes of solving them with the learners. As the teacher involves the group in clarifying and interacting on issues and generating and building on ideas for possible solutions, the teacher becomes a model for children. Children see that it is all right to question, to wonder, to make mistakes, and to use others as resources.

The teacher should also guide and support children as they initiate their questions, own issues, and tasks. A variety of issues will be addressed. E.g., How can we rig up a special light in that shadowed area in the reading corner? How could we go about changing the playground hours to include evenings and weekends? How can we improve the nutrition in our local jail?

Interactions that are based on children's respect for one another's questions, concerns, ideas, backgrounds, and strengths are likely to lead to cohesiveness, teamwork, and a sense of unity. Children learn to care for each other as individuals, to use and build on each other's strengths while addressing issues that are important and meaningful to them.

When discoveries and integrations of personal learning are shared, all learners benefit. Children extend their personal knowledge, and move beyond themselves to contribute to the growth of others. Each learner is recognized as having a unique contribution that, after being shared, may be integrated and used by others.

Shared learning is greater learning.

## III. An Example of an Episode in a Responsive Classroom

The following anecdote describes an episode in a Responsive classroom. It demonstrates how the principles and the teaching guidelines work in a real situation.*

### The Episode

In September Darren, age eight, was unable to "settle down" or focus on any activity. He had been in special education classes in which skill work was not relevant to his out-of-school world. He would not read, write a story or work on a mathematics ditto sheet. He swore, hit, would not complete any task, and bothered other children. His test scores were far below the norm.

The teacher did not punish, demean, or ignore him. Instead, she watched carefully to see in which tasks he showed any flicker of interest and which he rejected most vehemently. She noted in which situations he became violent, what made him lose his temper, and which children he seemed to get along best with. She talked quietly with him to try to find out what interests he had outside the classroom.

The teacher gains information about the children.

Several other children in this classroom were similar to Darren in their rejection of primers,

*In previous sections of this chapter, the marginal phrases have summarized the text. In the following example, the marginal phrases analyze the operation of the principle and guidelines in the episode described.

workbooks, and rigid groupings. The teacher had been observing and talking to them individually, too. She had some ideas about what might interest each of them, but she decided to try to get them to express their own ideas, and make their own suggestions and decisions. She met with this small group of children and helped them to identify their problems.

"I hate the math workbook--it's so dumb--7 times 7, 3 times 6--they don't even do 12 times anything--it's for babies."

Children raise problem issues.

"I don't feel like doing anything--I'd rather go home and watch T.V."

"Me, too. I hate work."

"The other kids always bother me when I'm doing something--like the other day, I was taking the clock apart and Andy and Maria and Johnny started playing with the pieces and they lost one--they didn't care--they're so stupid--they don't know anything about clocks."

"Why can't we read something good like comics--the Fantastic Four--you should see the neat things they do--they just built this machine that makes things 10 times smaller than they are to begin with--Hey, if you put something really little in a machine like that, would it disappear because it got so small?"

Children clarify their problems and goals.

After they discussed their problems, agreeing and arguing, the teacher asked them what sort of things they would like to do in the classroom.

"Let's build something."

"Yeah, let's build something that'll really surprise those other kids--a time machine!"

Children build their own ideas.

"How could we do that?"

"Well, first you need some electricity."

"Why?"

"So the thing'll run, of course."

"How do you make electricity?"

"I don't know--maybe we can't make it?"

"Yes, you can--my brother showed me how to once with dry cells and wires."

Children identify resources/role models.

"What's a dry cell?"

The children were excited, and they decided to make electricity.

"What are we going to do with it?"

Children ask their own questions and make their own plans.

"Maybe we could make it turn on lights--let's make a light show!"

"And the other kids can dance."

"Maybe Andy can play his guitar."

"I'll bring some records--where could we get a record player?"

They asked the teacher if she could get one; she said she would bring one from home and asked them what else they thought they'd need for the light show.

"Some lights--light bulbs--maybe colored ones."

"A dry cell."

"Wire."

"Where are we going to get all that stuff? I'm not allowed to go to the store at night."

The teacher asked if anyone had any of these things at home. Darren said he would bring the dry cell. Debbie said she'd bring a light bulb. Val said he would, too. Theresa and Fernando didn't think they could bring anything for tomorrow, but thought they might be able to the next day. The teacher said she would bring the rest of the things they needed. Then she asked how they could find out more about electricity, about how to connect the wires, and switches.

Children carry out their own plans.

"I'll ask my brother--he fixes T.V.s--maybe he could come to school."

Children use many resources.

"We could ask Mr. Albert [the custodian]; he's always fixing the lights."

"We could get some books."

The teacher asked if anyone had books at home that explained electricity or described experiments.

"I have an encyclopedia."

"Maybe there's stuff about it in the sixth grade science book."

"We could go to the library."

Children take responsibility for their own learning.

The next day the children arrived with light bulbs, a 1-1/2 volt dry cell, library books, and great eagerness to begin. The teacher provided copper wire, additional bulbs and porcelain bases. She gave them their own space in a large cloakroom to work. They looked through the books and began connecting wires and inventing switches.

Children anticipate and make their own connections.

"How come the light won't go on?"

"You haven't got enough white stuff off the wire."

"You didn't connect it right. Look at the picture in the book."

"Oh, let's try it this way."

"Wow, it works!!!"

There are respectful peer interactions.

They found they needed more light fixtures, and Darren brought some from home. Three days later they had completely "wired" the cloakroom and produced their own light show to music. The rest of the class was delighted...even Andy, Maria and Johnny.

Answers lead to new questions.

Teacher uses learners' interests for skill development.

During succeeding days their experimentation expanded to include the use of a voltmeter and fuses; discovering what would conduct electricity and what would not; and constructing light switches and doorbells. The teacher had suggested that the children keep logs of their experiments so that they could share them with others, and have a record of what worked and how, what didn't and why. Into their logs went experiments, stories, diagrams, drawings, plans. They also dictated and taped descriptions of what they were doing and played the tapes for the class. The children decided that eventually all the logs would be put together into a book called Our Electricity Book and placed in the class library so that everyone could read it and do the experiments.

Teacher helps children set goals, assess their work, and solve problems.

The teacher met with the children a few times a week, individually or in groups of two or three. Debbie and Val were working together on conductivity and wanted a joint conference to share what they had done with the teacher. The next time Theresa joined

them and complained that they were taking more than their share of materials. The teacher mediated and Debbie and Val, after initial indignation, agreed to test only one or two materials at a time. As the children read through their logs, the teacher noticed new words being used. She also noticed that the children's handwriting was improving, so that others could read their work.

Skills are learned in real-world situations and assessed in the context of their use.

***The teacher helps children set goals, assess their work, and solve problems.***

She asked them to make new plans. During one conference, Darren confessed that what he really wanted to do next was learn Morse Code and build a telegraph. The teacher encouraged him. He went to the library, got a book, and taught himself the code. The next thing the teacher knew, he was directing the other children in the group to help build a telegraph set. At some point, he realized that he couldn't send and receive messages if no one else knew the code. He asked the teacher for help. She asked him, in turn, to think of how the others might learn it.

Teacher-child conferences support child decision-making.

"I could teach them. I could make copies of the code from the book and then practice with them."

Child initiates own goals and plans.

The teacher asked how long he thought it would take for them to learn.

"Well, maybe a week. I only took three days, but there are more of them. I think a week."

*The Morse Code Experiment:*
*a new way of communicating.*

At the end of the week, two other children had learned Morse Code. Darren was pleased with himself and happy that they could now send messages. They started with light bulbs and then experimented.

Materials and experiences are logical and predictable.

"Let's try sending Morse Code with the door bell."

"Hey, I can't understand your message!"

"How come?--I'm sending it right--look here."

"Try it again."

"I still don't get it. Can't tell the longs from the shorts."

"Guess the bell won't work too good. What do you think, Val?"

"I'm trying to get these wires in right..."

Children share what they have learned.

"Ah, let's go back to the lights."

The teacher did not even have to encourage the children to share what they were doing with the rest of the class. After the success of the light show, each time they made an exciting discovery, they would check with the teacher to find a good time and then make an announcement.

"O.K., everybody, there'll be an electricity show today right after recess."

The other children in the class enjoyed the "shows" and many stopped by the electricity area at other times to learn how things worked.

"Well, maybe those other kids aren't so stupid after all--Maria just sent a perfect Morse Code message."

Children respect each other.

At one point, someone in the class said that they shouldn't be using up so much electricity. Her parents always told her to turn off the lights to save it--how come everybody just kept turning more and more lights on? (By this time the whole room was wired with blinking colored lights.) Darren said he didn't know what she was talking about and that he thought the whole thing was dumb. A few other children said that they had heard something about an "energy crisis." They asked the teacher what that meant and she explained about conserving natural resources.

Real-world issues and problems are raised and acted upon.

"Let's build that machine that makes everything ten times smaller. If things are really small, they'll hardly use up any energy!"

"No, let's build a rocket and just go someplace else when everything's used up."

"What if everything's used up in other places, too?"

"Maybe we should turn the lights off..."

Analysis of the Example

Darren, Debbie, Theresa, Val, Andy, Maria, Johnny and the other children in this classroom were respected for the interests, knowledge, and behaviors they brought to the environment. The teacher used these assets to build relevant learning experiences.

The children were developing responsibility for control of their learning as the teacher allowed them to work in a real-world situation that motivated them. She supported them as they risked, explored, and made and learned from mistakes within clear limits defined by their goals. They were accepting responsibility for their own decision-making and learning.

Their skills of reading, writing, working individually and together productively, sharing, and

respecting each other were developed and integrated within a common experience. The materials and experiences, the learners, and the teacher together comprised a productive learning situation. Darren and his friends were interested enough and the materials and experiences were meaningful and logical enough to promote the children's

- Asking of their own questions. ("How can we make the light go on?")
- Anticipation of probable outcomes. ("If I connect these wires this way, this may happen.")
- Experimenting and exploring to find their own answers. ("Will the bell work for sending Morse Code?")
- Generating more questions. ("What things will conduct electricity?")
- Sharing and integrating discoveries in a group context. ("Can you understand my diagram of a bell system in Our Electricity Book?")

The children grew in their individual concepts of themselves. They showed this growth through their interest, motivation, excitement, and sharing with others. They grew intellectually as they developed skills in reading directions, following directions, writing sentences, spelling and new vocabulary, handwriting, diagraming, record-keeping, learning a new code system, explaining ideas with pictures, understanding new equipment (voltmeter), using resources, problem solving, team work, and evaluation. They verbalized their attitudes toward learning when they said:

"I don't want to stop."
"I wonder if..."
"I've got to find out if this works."
"What's gonna happen?"
"Does this make any sense?"
"Forget about recess..."

The classroom became pluralistic when one group contributed to the growth of the whole group. Each person's questions, answers and discoveries were respected and viewed as assets to the learning environment. When the children raised the issue of the energy crisis, they began to deal with a larger, real-world problem as an interdependent community of learners.

Thus the Responsive principles were put into operation by this teacher's implementation of Responsive teaching guidelines.

## IV. Theoretical Base

The Responsive principles and guidelines are based on four distinct sources of theory.

The principles and guidelines are based on:
- the developmental learning theory of Piaget
- the cultural pluralism theories of Carnoy, Castañeda, Fanon, Freire, Gordon, Hilliard, Mercer, and Rist
- the sociological theories of Moore and Anderson
- the humanistic theories of Maslow, Rogers, Combs, and Brown.

1) The developmental learning theory of Piaget shows us clearly that children actively construct knowledge as they naturally develop and interact with their environment. We cannot give them skills and knowledge as we would give them a model airplane or a red sweater. All children, no matter what their ethnic or economic background or cultural heritage, organize and regulate their experiences at levels of complexity comparable with those of other children. Teachers can only offer opportunities in which children may acquire skills through experience, and help children take responsibility for their own learning.

2) The cultural pluralism theories of Carnoy, Castañeda, Fanon, Freire, Gordon, Hilliard, Mercer, and Rist help us understand and focus on the need for equitable interactions among and treatment of all persons and groups. Diverse ways of doing things should be valued and built upon; experiences should promote and enhance the potential for self-determination of all people. In classrooms, children need to experience reasonably risk-free learning environments that enable them to be socialized at their own pace and in their own way, by building on values of their unique heritages. Children then experience support for their own culture, life style, and learning style. They have opportunities to discover and respect similarities and differences among themselves and learn that they can contribute to the growth of others in their peer group and in the larger society.

3) The sociological theories of Moore and Anderson tell us that there are specific conditions of an environment through which the young of any culture have successfully assimilated knowledge, skills, behaviors, and attitudes necessary for survival. As culture goes back further than schools, we can identify the important aspects of previously-successful learning environments and translate these into a school environment:

a. Learners build their intellectual knowledge from a variety of perspectives, relationships, and roles; in their own style and from their own frame of reference.

b. Learners follow their own motivations and gain rewards by recognizing that what they give to

and gain from their own experiences and interactions are important.

c. Learners are physically and psychologically safe to explore within clear limits without being imposed upon or demeaned by others.

d. Learners begin to predict experiences and make connections among them.

e. Learners learn to take control over their own goals, decisions, and activities.

f. Learners begin to evaluate the meaning and importance of their own learning experiences.

4) The humanistic theories of Maslow, Rogers, Combs, and Brown would make education more human by synthesizing the cognitive and affective elements in individual and group learning. Each individual is seen as a unique human being with enormous potential. Teaching and learning can become both more humane and more productive. A healthy learning environment values personal development as individual learners are helped to develop their personal constructs by using their own integrated thoughts, knowledge, and feelings. Learners themselves are the main source of content. The environment focuses on the interaction of the physical, social, psychological, and emotional development of individuals as they realistically value themselves and others. There is growth toward individual and group authenticity, communication, and productivity on real-world issues.

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# 8 LANGUAGE AND READING IN THE RESPONSIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM

## Introduction

In this chapter we describe the Responsive Education Program's approach to language and reading. We expect that someone who wants to know about reading instruction in the program might have the following questions:

1. What reading materials are used?
2. What methods of instruction are recommended?
3. What means of assessment is used?
4. What techniques of grouping learners and keeping records are recommended?

This chapter will address these questions. In order to discuss them, however, we find it necessary to consider reading within the broader context of language. Reading--like speaking, listening, and writing--is a language process, a means by which people convey or receive information. It is auxiliary to the central phenomenon of language or communication.

Reading is a language process.

The Responsive Education Program treats the acquisition of reading skills as part of a larger language program. To determine the best way to help children learn to read, we examine the phenomenon of language itself. We draw on the findings of developmental psychology and linguistics for information about the nature of language, the way learners acquire language, and the way reading fits into the total use of language. Since the program seeks to support and build on natural learning processes, this information provides a basis for applying the Responsive goals and principles to language and reading.

The Responsive Education Program treats reading as part of a broader language program.

This chapter begins with a definition of language. Part II discusses language acquisition, processing, and expansion, and Part III discusses reading and reading skills within this framework. Part IV states the Responsive goals and principles for

language and reading, and Part V presents an illustration of the classroom application of this approach.

## I. The Nature of Language

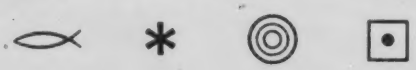
Language can be broadly defined as any medium by which human beings communicate with themselves and others. This paper is concerned with verbal language and its two forms, oral language and written language. Many other media of communication, however, such as music, art, pantomime, and dance, can also be classified as language.

Language consists of symbols, meanings, and structure.

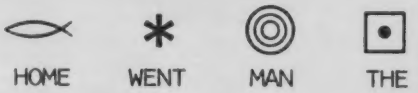
Language in all forms consists of three elements: symbols, meanings, and structure. Symbols are the most obvious characteristic. In verbal language, these are words. For communication to occur, however, the symbols must also have mutually agreed-upon meanings and they must be organized into some sort of order or structure. In verbal language, this structure is syntax or grammar.

The need for all three elements can be illustrated by a hypothetical example of written language that does not use the Roman alphabet.

1. The use of unfamiliar symbols makes it apparent that symbols alone are insufficient.



2. In order to communicate, the symbols must have meanings,




3. and they must fall into a logical, orderly system.

With these three elements in mind, we can further define verbal language, in Ruddell's words, as a "system represented by sound symbols with conventional meanings shared by members of a linguistic group."[1]

Reading is the means by which we receive written communication. It is analogous to listening,* the means by which we receive oral language. The two other processes related to verbal language are speaking, the means we use to convey oral communication, and writing, the means we use to convey written communication. Since language is the material that makes reading necessary and meaningful, reading depends on all three elements of language. The act of reading consists not only of recognizing symbols but also of assigning meanings to them and recognizing their organizational patterns.

## II. Language Acquisition, Processing, and Expansion

Oral language is the primary form of verbal language, and the development of oral language almost invariably precedes the development of written language. Before discussing the development of reading skills, therefore, we first consider the acquisition, processing, and expansion of oral language.

### Language Acquisition

There are four general points about the way young children acquire the use of oral language. These points will apply to the development of reading skills.

1) The first point concerns motivation: Why do the young want to learn to talk? Learners acquire the language spoken in their presence in order to communicate with others in their world and thereby establish a sense of separate identity. Infants observe that the exchange of sounds and intonations between persons produces human response. Through trial and error, they find that imitation of the sounds and intonations enables them to participate in that activity and aids the operations of their daily life.

Language learning is naturally motivated.

2) The second point concerns the content of the learners' speech: What do they talk about? Language learners talk about topics that have personal meaning. Learners use their newly developing skill to express questions, feelings, desires, demands.

Its content is topics that have personal meaning.

*"Listening" here refers not only to hearing but also to recognizing and interpreting spoken symbols. This process is sometimes termed "auding."

Language users help learners by:
•modeling language
•emphasizing meaning, and
•encouraging them.

3) The third point has to do with the ways experienced language users help children acquire language, or what might be called methods of instruction: What do the experienced language users do to aid the young in learning to talk? The natural interaction between experienced language users and children contains three essential methods of helping children acquire language, although the users may not be consciously aware of the methods. The first of these is modeling. All language users within the hearing environment of language learners are modeling language in meaningful ways. This constant flow of information gradually embeds the organizational patterns of language. It would be unnecessary and confusing to explain these generalizations to young children, yet the children learn.

The second method is emphasizing meaning. Although they may be unaware of the process, language users help learners acquire language by supporting the meaning rather than the technical accuracy of the learner's communication. When an infant produces one word (e.g., "milk") signifying a complete sentence, language users praise it and translate it to represent the complete sentence (e.g., "I want some milk."). Young language learners are permitted and expected to progress through a gradual acquisition process, often termed "successive approximations." When supported by adequate praise and patience, the approximations quite rapidly come to resemble the models in the immediate language environment.

The third method, which is related to the second, is to provide an emotional response to young users' language. In normal interaction, children receive some sort of human response to their use of language. A positive, supportive response will aid language acquisition.

Progress is best assessed by standards of natural interaction.

4) The fourth point concerns measurement of progress: How do we know how the learners are doing? The best milieu of assessment is the natural interaction among users. Can language learners make themselves understood; do they communicate? Rate of progress is an individual matter, affected by many variables, but children's language competence will usually reflect their language community's regard for the use of language and their need for it. The criterion for assessing progress is whether a child is gaining command of language to the degree that he or she presently needs and wants it.

## Language Processing

Two other points about the processing of oral language apply to the development of reading skills. The first is that the mind receives and interprets language holistically, rather than one word at a time. The mind's language bank can handle "car-here" and fill in "the" and "is" to make complete language sense, or it can take a partially inaudible announcement, such as "Plane arrive-- at gate Fi-- from Chica--," and fill in the blanks to produce a comprehensible statement.

The mind processes language holistically.

A second point is that not all words are of equal importance in conveying meaning. Some of the words in a sentence carry much more information than others. The mind leaps to those concept carriers and dismisses items of less importance.

Some words carry more information than others.

These two statements about language are important to both language and reading instruction. They contradict the traditional instructional assumptions that language is interpreted one word at a time and that all words are equally important, and they point to the conclusion that strict adherence to a standard dialect is not essential to effective communication. Deviations can be considerable with no significant loss of meaning.

Strict adherence to a standard dialect is not essential to effective communication.

## Language Expansion

A central concern of the Responsive Education Program is to provide learners with as many options as possible that have promise of being useful or serviceable. Language is an important domain of such options, and the program advocates helping learners expand their language use to become aware of and competent in a variety of options.

The concept behind language expansion is that there are a variety of ways to express any given thought. Different options may serve different purposes. Options can exist within one dialect or language (e.g., varying styles or degrees of formality) or they can include several dialects or languages (e.g., standard usage, native language or dialect, local dialect, individual dialect [idiolect], Biblical English). A repertoire of language options can increase a learner's understanding of others' use of language and enable the learner to function in a variety of situations.

Language expansion can increase learners' understanding and enable learners to function in a variety of situations.

R. B. Ruddell summarizes these intentions in his statement of the goals of instruction in a total language program:[2]

"Development of:

1. The ability to use clear communication in oral and written form in a variety of social settings.

2. The ability to understand and use oral and written language in expressive form.

3. The ability to express, interpret and enjoy thought in creative form.

4. Sensitivity to and appreciation of language as used in a variety of life situations."

To aid language expansion, teachers should enable learners to hear a variety of options, and should accept variation.

Such goals imply two important elements for the role of teachers or other language users in aiding language expansion. The first is that language learners should hear a variety of language options in meaningful contexts. The second is that teachers or other language users should model a nonjudgmental attitude about language. Variations in usage should be treated as different, not as better or worse. Since transmission of meaning is the only purpose of language, and the mind is capable of processing considerable variation without loss of meaning, variation should not be judged by the standards of technical accuracy.

## III. The Act of Reading

Within the framework of oral language, we can now discuss in more detail the characteristics of reading and the skills it requires. We turn first to the characteristics of reading.

### What is Reading?

Reading is listening to print.

It is an interaction between reader and author.

Reading is to written language what listening is to oral language, or reading is listening to print. When you read, you are listening to a speaker who is not present, or, as Goodman, Burke and Sherman define the process, participating in a "private, ongoing, long-distance discussion between the reader and the author."[3] This definition can be illustrated by the following diagram.[4]

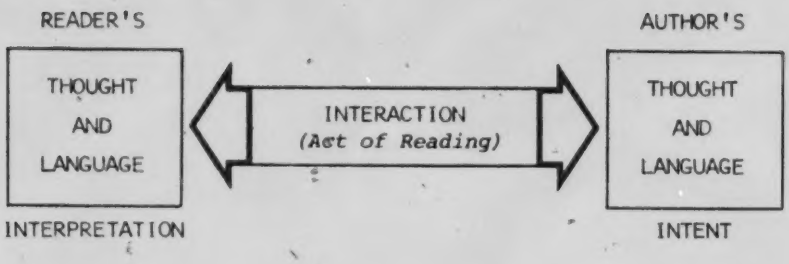



Figure 1. A Definition of Reading.

Two other parallels to listening are significant. First, reading, like listening, is a receptive and thus silent process in its natural state. Oral reading, then, makes an additional demand on everyday functional reading. This consideration is extremely important in reading instruction and assessment. Oral reading performance should not be assumed to be an accurate representation of silent reading competence. The oral rendition may or may not do justice to the reader's ability.

Reading is a silent process in its natural state.

Second, the complete act of reading, like listening, involves all three elements of language --symbols, meanings, and structure—simultaneously. If any element is isolated or missing, the process can no longer be termed reading. Decoding symbols is not reading; Walter Loban has referred to that isolated process as "barking at print."[5] For the reader to have access to all three cueing systems, the content must be within the reader's experiential background and the reader must be familiar with the structure of the language in which the topic is being presented. In other words, there must be a match between the reader's experience and language and those of the author.

It involves all three elements of language simultaneously.

We can summarize these three characteristics of reading as follows:

1. Reading is an interaction between a reader and an author.

2. Reading is a silent process in its natural state.

3. Reading can take place only when whole language is present.

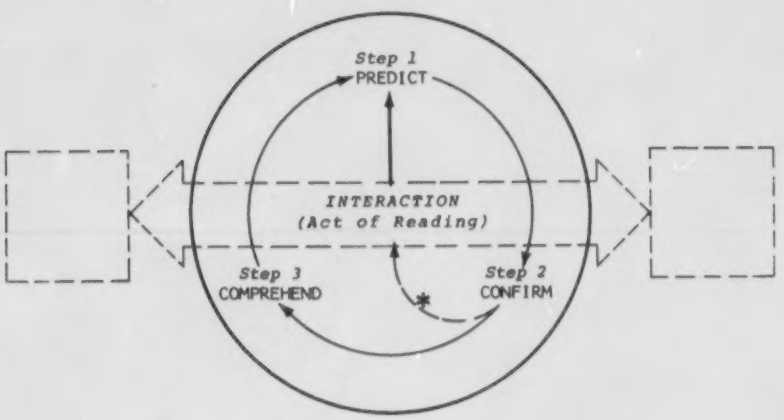
These points provide the basis for a discussion of what competent readers do during the act of reading.

## What are the Skills of Reading?

Reading is a problem-solving process.

The reader predicts, confirms, and comprehends the author's message.

Observation of the actual behavior of readers has shown that the interaction between the reader's mind and the author's message follows a hypothesis-testing pattern. Reading is a problem-solving process. When confronted with an author's written language, the reader engages his or her experience and language sense to "predict, confirm and comprehend" the encoded message.[6] The following diagram illustrates this process.[7]




* *Reconsider if unacceptable*

Figure 2. The Process of Reading

In the first step of the process, prediction, the reader uses his or her own language and previous experience to anticipate the substance and structure of the material. (A listener follows a similar procedure in anticipating the substance and structure of oral language.) The reader may base anticipations on the surrounding meaning, grammar, or graphic cues (phonetic sound symbols). These anticipations form the basis for the reader's prediction, or guess.

In the second step, confirmation, the reader tests the guess with the following criteria:

Does it make sense?

Does it sound like language?[8]

If the guess passes these tests, the reader accepts it and in the third step, comprehension, incorporates the guess into the process of developing meaning.

If the guess fails either test, regression occurs: the reader makes a new prediction and subjects it to the same criteria. The reader repeats this regression or correction strategy until the prediction is confirmed.

Studies have also shown that competent readers consciously and unconsciously often substitute logical synonyms for words in the printed text.[9] For example, a reader may substitute another name for a name that is unfamiliar or difficult to pronounce, or substitute the word "said" for such more specific words as "exclaimed" or "replied." If the synonym makes sense, the reader can proceed smoothly. The two points made earlier about language processing--that the mind receives language holistically and that words are of varying importance--explain why the readers are able to continue smoothly when making logical substitutions.

The substitution of logical synonyms often indicates the reader has grasped the author's meaning.

Although this practice occurs frequently during silent reading, a teacher may be aware of it only when it occurs during children's oral reading. Such substitutions, sometimes termed "miscues," are often caused by a difference between the reader's oral dialect and the author's dialect. The difference may be due either to less life experience and therefore less elaborate language, or to <u>different</u> life experience and language. The latter variable can take the form of a different group dialect, individual dialect, or even child dialect--structures based on incorrect

generalizations of rules (e.g., The mouses jumpeded up firstest). In either case, substitution of a synonym often indicates that the reader has successfully grasped the author's meaning.

## Acquisition of Reading Skills

The four points about the acquisition of oral language apply to the acquisition of reading skills.

If we consider the four points made earlier about natural language acquisition in light of the characteristics and skills of reading, we can derive four analogous points about the acquisition of reading skills.

1) Motivation: The material should engage learners by being relevant to their needs or wants.

2) Content: The printed content should be whole language that makes sense and is predictable. It should represent the learners' experience and be expressed in familiar structure.

3) Instructional methods: Competent readers should model use of reading skills, emphasize meaning, and support learners in using their own resources (common sense based on language use and life experience) to predict, confirm, and comprehend written language.

4) Assessment: Learners should be assessed only in common sense, total language terms--e.g., do they understand what they have read?

These points result in an approach to reading that is quite different from that of traditional programs. They indicate that the traditional isolation of letters and words and the use of rules and generalizations to talk <u>about</u> reading are counterproductive to the strategies actually required of readers.

Children learn rules through use rather than through abstract explanations.

Asking children to learn abstract rules before they become familiar with the concrete applications would violate the natural sequence of language acquisition. Furthermore, Jean Piaget's work in developmental psychology indicates that young children can not deal with abstractions in the way that adults can.* Those who appear to do so may be merely reciting words to please adults. Young language learners acquire

*See Chapter 3, "Cognitive Development in the Responsive Education Program.

rules by imitating their use rather than by hearing abstract explanations, and can apply rules without ever articulating them.

Knowledge of phonics or sound/symbol associations is important to reading, but learners acquire this knowledge at the same time as a sense of the structure of language and the expectation that written language will have meaning. This learning is accomplished through considerable actual exposure to meaningful print. If you want to learn to swim, you get into water. If you want to learn to read, you get into print.

Phonics is most helpful as the final set of clues used in reading.

In the exposure process we advocate, learners frequently watch the printed text while hearing competent oral reading. The use of whole, meaningful language provides learners with the information necessary to make their own generalizations. Learners can gather and compare and incorporate with their existing knowledge 1) information about word meanings, 2) information about word order and language structure, and 3) information about graphic representations of sounds.

In actual use, phonics serves as the final piece of information used in analysis, the other two serving first to narrow the field of possibilities. This sequence can be illustrated by a hypothetical analysis of the following sentence:

"Ten trucks were on the freeway."

Upon encountering the word trucks, the reader can use semantic and structural information to narrow the universe of options 1) semantically, to something that appears on a freeway, and 2) grammatically, to a plural noun. The reader can then use knowledge of sound/symbol relationships to select the word "trucks."

It is much more difficult to approach the word trucks with only phonetic strategies and put together t-r-u-c-k-s with no additional verification. A reader who uses primarily phonics must be trained to a degree not really needed by an average, competent reader. In this case tracks, tricks, and tucks don't make sense, in light of the whole sentence, and the reader would waste time by moving in a strict word-by-word sequence. Phonics is most helpful as the final set of clues used to accept or reject a thoughtful guess.

## IV. Responsive Goals and Principles for Language and Reading

The preceding sections of the chapter, drawing on the findings of linguistics and developmental psychology, have discussed ways teachers can support and build on the natural acquisition of reading and other language skills--by treating as part of a broader language program, using oral language as a bridge to written language, and emphasizing communication as the primary purpose of language. Since the Responsive Education Program seeks to work with natural learning processes, this information provides teachers with a basis for translating the Responsive goals and principles into more specific goals and principles for language and reading.

The goals of the Responsive Education Program--promoting the development of problem-solving abilities, of healthy self-concept, and of culturally pluralistic attitudes and behaviors--are designed to enable individuals to function effectively and in ways that are beneficial to themselves and society. The Responsive principles address the teacher's role by describing the conditions of a learning environment that supports the achievement of the goals.*

Responsive goals for language and reading are:
- to foster development of oral and written language skills
- to help children develop healthy self-concepts as language users
- to help children become aware of and respect various dialects and languages, and build a repertoire of useful options.

These goals and principles include not only a concern for the natural acquisition of cognitive skills but also other concerns related to cognitive, affective, and social development. Thus the statements of Responsive goals and principles for language and reading reflect these other concerns as well as the discussion in the preceding sections of this chapter.

The program's general goals and the goals for language and reading can be stated as follows:

1) Support cognitive growth by promoting the development of problem-solving abilities. Help children gain greater range and precision in oral and written language, and become more aware of and competent in problem-solving processes by attaching language to problem-solving experiences.

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*See Chapter 3, "Cognitive Development in the Responsive Education Program"; Chapter 4, "Healthy Self-Concept in the Responsive Education Program"; Chapter 5, "Cultural Pluralism in the Responsive Education Program"; and Chapter 7, "Principles and Teaching Guidelines of the Responsive Education Program."

2) Support affective growth by fostering the development of healthy self-concept. Help children value and enjoy their primary language and use language to express their individuality.

3) Support social growth by promoting the development of culturally pluralistic attitudes and behaviors. Help children become aware of and respect the language and dialects of various ethnic and cultural groups, and build a repertoire of useful and satisfying language options (e.g., varying dialects, styles, degrees of formality).

The Responsive principles and their applications to language and reading can be stated as follows:

1) The Learners' experience, backgrounds, and interests are assets. The teacher regards children's natural language as an asset (e.g., by listening attentively and not correcting surface structure when meaning is clear) and helps them build upon it in developing new language and reading skills.

2) Learners develop increasing responsibility for and control of their own learning. Children participate in selecting and generating the content of language and reading activities, in setting goals for themselves, and in evaluating their work (e.g., deciding whether meaning has been communicated).

3) Learners acquire skills and concepts in the context of meaningful, integrated learning experiences. Children acquire language and reading skills in the context of activities that have personal meaning and practical application (e.g., obtaining information or reading directions for projects they wish to pursue, following the text of songs being sung, reading printed announcements, schedules, recipes, menus). Assessment of progress is based on the natural and practical use of a message--on the learners' ability to retell a story in their own words or on their ability to act on a message (e.g., follow a recipe, perform a science experiment, sing the words of a song).

4) Learners share knowledge and experience and interact on issues. Children extend and complement one another's reading and language skills (e.g., work together to read, write, or retell a story, create alternative endings or sequels to a story and discuss or enact them, compile books of stories or favorite recipes).

Responsive principles for language and reading are:

- children's natural language is an asset
- children participate in selecting content and evaluating their work
- children acquire skills in the content of activities that have personal meaning and practical application
- children extend and complement one another's skills.

## V. Application to the Classroom

This section of the chapter presents an illustration of the classroom application of the Responsive approach to language and reading. It describes a hypothetical classroom and then discusses the roles of the adults in the classroom.

### The Classroom*

The particular classroom described here contains 26 five- to eight-year-olds and a teacher, a teacher assistant, and a student volunteer. Subject areas are usually presented in the context of a single theme or topic chosen for the day or week. The function of different room areas varies according to the current topic.**

Learning activities draw on children's interests and experience.

The topic for this week is the different ways people celebrate birthdays. The adults have been gathering the children's questions on this topic (e.g., "Does everyone have a birthday cake?" "Do old people have birthday parties?"). They and the children have agreed to bring to the classroom books, stories, and ideas from their families about birthdays.

As we observe this one day of the week, we will see not only activities connected with the birthday theme, but also activities that continue from previous topics or serve other needs and interests of the children. Activities related to other subject areas take place, but we will see only those related to language and reading.

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*In previous sections, the marginal phrases have summarized the content of the text. In the following description, the marginal phrases analyze the application of the Responsive approach.

**Other age groupings, approaches to subject areas, and room arrangements are possible in a Responsive classroom. Chapter 9, "Classroom Description of the Responsive Education Program," describes two other kinds of Responsive classrooms. In both, the children's ages fall within a two-year span. In one, the approach to subject areas and room arrangement is similar to that described in this chapter, but the children are less independent and require more structure. In the other, various subject areas are scheduled for specific times of day, and the room contains learning centers related to subject areas.

As we enter the classroom before the children arrive, we notice a variety of furniture: desks, chairs, small tables that can be used individually or joined for group work, large tables, benches, and rugs.

The room arrangement is flexible.

One area of the room has been temporarily designated as a "What We Know About Birthdays" center. It contains tables and chairs and, on low shelves, paper and writing implements, arts and crafts materials, and the books and other materials about birthdays that the children and adults have brought to the classroom.

Another area has been designated as a "Birthday Foods" center. A frosting recipe is posted on the wall at the children's eye level; on a large table are a cake, cupcakes, and cookies made by some of the children's parents, and the ingredients and implements needed to make the frosting.

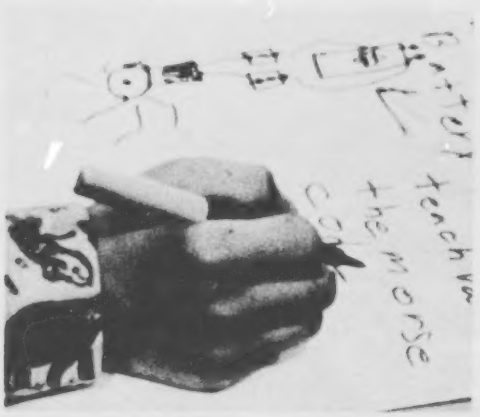
The book and magazine corner, a comfortable carpeted area outside the main traffic pattern, contains magazines, cartoon books, comic books, paperbacks, trade books, texts, television guides, and picture books. They reflect a variety of ethnic and cultural groups. Nearby is a listening post with a record player, records, a cassette tape recorder, and cassette tapes. Here the children can listen to music and stories on records or tape and record and listen to their own stories.

There are printed materials at various levels of abstraction.

On the walls and bulletin boards, at the children's eye level, are samples of dictated or written natural language, copies of songs and poems with accompanying illustrations, a schedule of today's conferenes between children and the teacher, the week's menu, a calendar with space for recording information about each day, and a letter from a grandmother describing how birthdays were celebrated in Denmark when she was a little girl.

Mutal appreciation of natural oral language is encouraged.

The environment demonstrates that written language is useful.



*Children get written language to work for them.*

## Activities

Children use language skills in combination to focus on an immediate concern.

Among the first children to arrive are Debbie and Michael, who go to the "What We Know About Birthdays" area and continue yesterday's project of drawing pictures and writing stories about birthday celebrations. At one point, neither knows how to spell the word "presents" and Debbie asks the nearest adult--Ms. Benson, the teacher assistant. Ms. Benson asks Debbie where the word "presents" might be in her Concept Dictionary (a dictionary of words organized into concept categories Debbie has selected).[10] Debbie recalls that it is on her "Christmas" page, and soon finds it. Ms. Benson asks her whether she would later like to add a "Birthday" page to her dictionary. Debbie answers that she would and Ms. Benson notes this idea in the notebook she carries. When Debbie completes her story, she asks Michael to read it; he has trouble deciphering her hand writing. She decides she'll have to copy the story more neatly to enable others to read it.

Children assess their use of language by deciding whether meaning has been conveyed.

The teacher considers individual differences when determining instructional approaches.

Another child, Brian, has now joined this project. He asks for the spelling of words more often. When the other two children cannot help him, Ms. Benson sits beside him and writes the words for him to copy. She knows that his confidence level and attention span could not tolerate the interruption and delay of looking up each word at this time.

The child's natural language is accepted and reinforced while additional uses of language are modeled.

Two five-year-olds join this group and want to dictate their stories to a writer. Cindy dictates her story first while Barbara draws a picture; then they will switch. Ms. Benson writes the exact words and grammar of Cindy's dialect, but uses standard spelling regardless of pronunciation. She makes sure that Cindy can see the left-to-right movement of the writing and observe the correct spelling of each word she has said.

Ms. Benson uses language terms (e.g., "I wrote all the words you said." "You have three sentences.") deliberately and consistently while she writes Cindy's story, so that Cindy becomes accustomed to these useful words in their natural context. She also finds it important to demonstrate to Cindy that the production of legible writing requires care and that adults, too, make mistakes and need to erase or start again. She leaves space below each line so that Cindy can later trace over the printing with a different color, and then, when she is ready, copy the printing just below each word. Later the adults in the

The child's oral language is used as a basis for the acquisition of written language skills.

classroom will read Cindy's story to her or with her as often as she wishes, if time permits.

David, one of the older boys, is writing a report about birthdays in the past and becomes frustrated when he cannot locate words in his Concept Dictionary quickly enough. Ms. Benson sits near David for a while, encouraging him, and tells him that after he finishes his report she will discuss with him a way of changing his dictionary so he can locate words faster. She notes in her notebook that David is probably ready to understand and appreciate the technique of alphabetizing, and plans to pursue the topic with the help of another child who converted her dictionary last month.

The teacher observes a practical need for additional skills and an opportunity for peer teaching.

Elsewhere in the room, Ms. Henderson meets with children singly or in small groups for conferences arranged in advance, at the request of either the children or the teacher. A volunteer high-school student, Mark, is reading a story to a small group in the book corner.

Mark tape records the story as he reads it so that the children can later listen independently to the tape while looking at the book. Before he begins reading, he asks the children to look at the cover of the book and make guesses about the story. He then tells them the title, A Birthday for Frances, and has them guess further. As he reads, he holds the book in a position that enables the children to see the print and the illustrations. He pauses at exciting points so that the children can predict what will happen next, and encourages them to join in phrases that are repeated.

Children learn the problem-solving strategy of predicting written language.

When the story is finished, he asks the children what they might have done if they were Frances and then asks if they or anyone they know have had an experience like the one discussed in the story.

Children have the opportunity to find personal meaning in stories about others (integrate).

As the children move on to other activities, Mark asks Jimmy to remain a bit longer. Ms. Henderson, the teacher, has been helping Jimmy with listening comprehension and oral language precision, and Mark wants to find out how well he remembers the story. He asks Jimmy to invite another child to listen to his retelling. While Jimmy finds a listener, Mark sets up the tape recorder to record Jimmy's oral language so that Ms. Henderson can examine it more closely later. (Jimmy is accustomed to the tape recorder; otherwise Mark would not use it for this purpose.) Jimmy omits some points, as he tells the story, but

Comprehension is assessed by the child's retelling of the story.

his listener asks a good question and he fills in the most important information. Afterwards, Mark takes the tape to Ms. Henderson's file, and jots down some notes about Jimmy's comprehension and oral language.

The teacher uses predictable content to
- read to children
- read with children
- guide children in independent reading.

Ms. Henderson is meeting with three children who are just beginning to learn to read. At this stage, she has been selecting stories whose content and language are quite predictable for these children. Two months ago, she would read aloud and tape record a complete story while the children watched their own copies. Then she would read it a second time, pausing to allow the children to fill in phrases or ideas. The children would subsequently listen to the tape several times, either alone or together, while following the text and trying to join in as much as possible.

By now Ms. Henderson, after reading the title and asking the children to predict the story, reads only the first portion alone, to establish the setting and characters. She then asks the children to read with her as much as they can, and drops out whenever their reading seems to be flowing without her. Since they are doing well with today's story, she does not rejoin them when they come to a difficult phrase, but instead asks them to recall what is happening in the story and guess the phrase. Their guess makes sense, and they continue.

*Interaction among children is an important aid to learning.*

Ms. Henderson tells us that this group will soon be capable of a more independent procedure in which she will merely discuss predictions with them and then leave them to read the story on their own. When they complete a story, she will assess their comprehension by listening to their retelling.

The teacher's next conference is with Julie, one of the eight-year-olds. This week Julie is reading along; her book, which she has borrowed from the public library, describes a girl who was a spy during the Revolution. Ms. Henderson knows from previous assessment that Julie is a competent reader. Since Julie's oral reading would not be a useful measure of her silent reading skills, Ms. Henderson asks her to talk about the story. Would she recommend it to friends, and why? Do any of the events resemble events in her own life? Why does she think the author wrote this story? Julie discusses these points and says that she has started to keep her own "spy notebook" as a result of this story. She would be willing to share her notebook with anyone else in the class who reads the book.

The teacher adapts instruction to the child's immediate purpose and level of responsibility.

Ms. Henderson next meets with Maria and Stevie. From recent individual assessments, she has learned that Maria usually grasps the meaning of what she reads, but tends to skip difficult words and phrases. Stevie, probably because of a previous school experience, follows each letter so carefully that he sometimes loses track of meaning, although he "sounds out" words quite well. Ms. Henderson asked the two children to work together because she saw that they could help each other.

Today, she offers them a choice of three paperback books. They select one and glance at the title, cover, and illustrations in order to guess what might happen in the story. Ms. Henderson then suggests, "Let's read it together. Stevie, act as if you are telling the story as you read, and Maria, try to make guesses when you come to new parts, and you'll probably be right. If a guess doesn't make sense, what might you do?" They reply that they could guess again until it does make sense.

All three begin reading, but Ms. Henderson's voice drops out after two pages. As the teacher has anticipated, Maria's reading is too rapid for Stevie's meticulous decoding, and he soon gives up excessive attention to detail and lets his knowledge and language join the flow. When Maria falters, however, Stevie fills in the word, pleased that he can

Children use each other as resources.

The teacher accepts logical substitutions, only when a substitution does not make sense.

keep moving. They substitute synonyms for words in the text several times, but continue smoothly because the substitutions make sense. At one point, they read, "And then she cried the little girl outside." For the first time, Ms. Henderson stops them and asks them to repeat the line. She plans to ask, "Does that make sense?" but doesn't have time; as soon as the children repeat the error, they correct it to "and then she carried the little girl outside."

Children learn to use context as a clue to meaning.

A few pages later, the word "enormous" appears. Neither child recognizes it. Ms. Henderson encourages them to use the context as a clue to meaning by suggesting that they skip the word and read the rest of the sentence. "He saw the _____ eggs, as big as a house," read Stevie and Maria. With the help of the context, the children guess "giant." Ms. Henderson asks them whether the guess seems to make sense; they answer that it does, and proceed. If a particular word were really important she might say, "What would fit there that starts like that?" She knows that when "enormous" becomes a part of their listening or speaking vocabulary, they will recognize it in print.

The teacher seeks to install confidence and independence.

When the two children come to the end of a chapter, Ms. Henderson asks them to recount it to her as if they were telling it to someone at home tonight. Since both children recall the story well, she discusses with them the ways they can read the next chapter without her. Stevie and Maria review their strategies for reading the difficult parts (e.g., guess, skip and read to end, think back to what has just happened, see whether guesses make sense). The teacher reminds them of the strengths they bring each other and leaves them to continue independently, with the responsibility of coming to her to retell the chapter when they finish.

Memorized oral language provides a basis for the acquisition of spelling and handwriting skills.

For beginning readers, it serves as a bridge to reading skills.

During recess, several children ask if they may take the cassette recorder to the playground to record their jump-rope rhymes. The group has already recorded a number of rhymes and copied them onto charts for use at the listening post and in group activities. Some of the children are making individual jump-rope rhyme books by copying the charts onto smaller pages. Ms. Henderson also uses the charts for language-recognition activities with beginning readers. The adults have encouraged others in the class to record and copy other songs and jingles that interest them; one group chose to work with television commercials and slogans.

When recess is over, the children gather for a large-group activity. Ms. Henderson invites the jump-rope group to play their latest tape and teach their chant to the group. After practicing the new chant, the children return to two of the familiar ones on charts, and recite them as a group in choral-reading fashion. The children sit in random order, with competent eight-year-old readers next to five-year-old beginners. The younger children can listen to accurate reading as they follow the print, and because it is a familiar group activity, no one fears missing a word or being put on the spot.

Group activities can provide
- a nonthreatening climate
- competent modeling
- enjoyable practice
- experience with whole language

The next activity is silent reading.[11] The children choose reading material from the book and magazine corner or continue with books begun earlier; the beginners choose primarily picture books and stories that have been read aloud to them several times. They sit or lie wherever they find a comfortable place, and all children and adults settle into a quiet period. If any children wish to read together, or if certain children need to subvocalize to comprehend, they are asked to move out of the hearing of the others.

Children have opportunities to select their own reading materials.

*When there is a match between the reader and the author, reading becomes an exciting, meaningful activity.*

As lunch time nears, the children who are ready first move toward the door and look at the weekly menu posted nearby. One child points to the middle day and says, "Wednesday." Another says, "Hey, good,

The daily routine provides opportunities for meaningful use of print.

it's hot dogs." "Yeah, and potato salad." "Oakmeal cookies," says another, and then laughs. "Whoever heard of oakmeal cookies?" "What's there to drink?" asks one, just joining the group, and a child close to the menu says, "Well, I know this word is milk and this one starts like chuck, so it must be chocolate milk." "Good," says another, and they all stream out the door.

Adult Roles

During lunch with Margaret Henderson and Diane Benson:

Observer: "What do you consider to be your roles as teachers?"

Ms. Henderson (in true Responsive fashion): "On the basis of this morning's visit, what do you see as our roles?"

Observer: "Fair Question."

Teachers:
- model uses of language
- use children's present language abilities
- guide the acquisition of reading strategies
- adjust instruction to individual children
- keep records
- plan activities and organize the environment
- assess children's progress

Reflection on the morning's activities brings to mind instances in which the adults:

1. Modeled purposeful and enjoyable uses of language.
   - listened attentively and respectfully
   - spoke clearly and pleasantly
   - read aloud to children while enabling them to see the printed text
   - wrote language in front of children
2. Used children's present language abilities to strengthen oral skills and to begin the acquisition of reading skills.
   - valued their oral language
   - provided a substantial amount of time for verbal interaction
   - captured memorized language in written form
   - paired and grouped children in ways that enabled them to extend and complement one another's skills
3. Guided the acquisition of effective reading strategies.
   - emphasized meaning before, during, and after reading
   - accepted logical word substitutes
   - worked to build habits of using context and illustrations to predict stories, ideas, and words

4. Adjusted language instruction to individual children.
   - considered children's self-concept, level of skill, and tolerance for frustration when setting expectations
   - recognized and used children's internal motivation and preferences and aptitudes in selecting reading content
   - recognized when choices of content should be limited to predictable material to aid success

5. Kept records of children's needs and interests.
   - kept notebooks of observations on children's progress and ideas for appropriate future activities
   - tape-recorded children's oral language

Ms. Henderson: "Were there any other roles that you didn't observe this morning but had to assume we perform at other times?"

Observer: "Well, planning activities and organizing the environment are obviously important, but not seen during class time. Also, you referred to assessment, but I didn't see any formal testing."

Ms. Benson: "Actually, that was typical. In very few cases do we give a formal test. Once we become familiar with the three cueing systems--symbols, meanings, and structure--and how they should operate, we can usually tell how a child is using them just from everyday reading and discussion sessions."

Ms. Henderson: "We listen for patterns in a child's performance. If the instruction based on those informal assessments doesn't seem to be effective, or if the patterns are not clear, we would do a more formal assessment such as the Reading Miscue Inventory."[12]

Observer: "I notice that you don't use texts and workbooks in any regular way. I know of teachers who are more comfortable using a particular text or who are required to do so by the district, state or school. In such cases, is it possible to teach in a Responsive way?"

Ms. Henderson: "That's an important question that can't be answered simply. I can begin by saying that I would hope that a teacher for whom particular texts were required would be working in some definite ways to modify or eliminate that requirement, since

one text is probably not capable of providing a relevant curriculum for all the children in a classroom.

"Secondly, there are ways to use existing materials when they are required or when a teacher is making the transition to less reliance on texts. In the case of reading, this usually means modifying the content and language to make them familiar to the children. One way is to select stories on the basis of the children's interest instead of following the sequence in the book. Another way is to read stories aloud to children whose dialect differs from that of the printed text, have them retell the stories in their own words and then use the retelling as the text. Another modification is to allow children to substitute words of their own dialect for words in the printed texts. Also, instead of introducing sounds or words in isolation, as exercises in texts sometimes suggest, the teacher can discuss words and sounds in the context of the children's own spontaneous language."

Texts can be modified so that content and language are familiar to the children.

Ms. Benson: "Do you have any particular questions about what you saw this morning?"

Observer: "Yes. I was very interested in Ben. Why didn't you ask him to read orally? I know you don't demand oral reading of children very competent in reading, but when I looked at what he was reading I didn't think he would be considered that independent."

Ms. Henderson: "Ben came to us from another school where he was labelled "learning-disabled" and was attending a remedial reading class. Since we do not agree with such practices we encouraged him from the beginning to participate in all class activities, as much as he felt comfortable doing so."

Ms. Benson: Ben taught me a lot about reading. When Ben is asked to read orally, he says nonsense words for many words, he mispronounces names and nearly all difficult words and he runs one sentence on the next, so that it sounds as if he isn't understanding any of the words he says. The first time I asked Ben to retell a story, I expected very little recall. I was prepared to have to encourage him in other ways about his class participation. Was I surprised! He paused a bit and then began to tell me the entire story in great detail. He still mispronounced names, but since they don't affect meaning, it didn't matter to the story. While he didn't use

the literal words of the author, he had all the ideas, and he just put them into his own words.

"Ben's oral reading is not the same as what is going on in his head. He must know intuitively that you read for meaning, but his school instruction has stressed looking at each word and saying something. He seems to keep the oral "noises" going independent of the thinking, rethinking, and correcting that must really be happening in his mind. Since he's been told so many times that he can't read, he no longer expects the sounds coming out to make sense.

Oral reading performance does not always reflect silent reading competence.

"I told Ben that he really must be a very good reader to remember so much about the story he read, and that I knew that you didn't have to say every word right in order to read. He looked surprised at that, but I knew that we still had a long way to go to convince him of his ability. I was so amazed at what I'd discovered I could hardly wait until after school when I could tell Margaret. She was surprised, too, and we talked a long time about how to help Ben and his parents to understand how one can read effectively without having the corresponding oral competence."13

Ms. Henderson: "His successful school performance and high motivation to participate fully have become the most convincing evidence for his parents. They are now extremely pleased and relieved about Ben."

Ms. Benson: "Ben has caused me to look at all skills differently. Perhaps many children who are labeled as deviant are simply incapable of or unaccustomed to demonstrating competence in traditional terms."

Notes

1. R. Ruddell, Reading-Lanuage Instruction: Innovative Practices (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1974).
2. Ibid., p. 148.
3. Y. Goodman, C. Burke, and B. Sherman, Strategies in Reading (New York: Macmillan, in press), p. 23.
4. Ibid., p. 15.

5. Seminar Conversations at the University of California, Berkeley, Calif., 1971.
6. Goodman, Burke, and Sherman, op. cit., p. 18
7. Ibid., p. 18.
8. K. Goodman, The Psycholinguistic Nature of the Reading Process (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1967).
9. Ibid.
10. Idea presented by Miscue Research Center at International Reading Association Pre-Convention Institute, Wayne State University, Detroit, 1971.
11. A modification of Sustained Silent Reading, by Robert and Marlene McCracken, The RIOTT program, Lippincott.
12. Y. Goodman and C. Burke, Reading Miscue Inventory Manual: Procedure for Diagnosis and Evaluation (New York: Macmillan, 1972).
13. Example based on data taken from tapes of children reading and retelling stories in Mt. Diablo Unified School District, Concord, Calif., 1970-73; and in Lebanon School District, Lebanon, N. H., 1974-75.

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# 9 CLASSROOM DESCRIPTION OF THE RESPONSIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM

## Introduction

This chapter describes ways that the goals, objectives, and principles of the Responsive Education Program operate in the classroom. Parts I and II present two examples of primary-grade Responsive classrooms. Part III answers some related questions about Responsive teaching.

The program's goals, objectives, and principles can be implemented in many different ways; the examples presented here are only two of many possible variations of Responsiveness. The approach a teacher chooses to use may depend on the teacher's previous experience and preference of teaching style; the children's interests, learning styles, and levels of development; the physical facilities available; and requirements established by the school district.

The goals of the program are to support cognitive growth, affective growth, and social growth.

### Goals, Objectives, and Principles of the Responsive Education Program

Before describing the two classrooms, we will summarize the program's goals, objectives, and principles.* The three goals of the program are:

1. To support learners' cognitive growth by promoting the development of problem-solving abilities.

2. To support affective growth by fostering the development of healthy self-concept.

3. To support social growth by promoting the development of culturally pluralistic attitudes and behaviors.

*See Chapter 3, "Cognitive Development in the Responsive Education Program"; Chapter 4, "Healthy Self-Concept in the Responsive Education Program"; Chapter 5, "Cultural Pluralism in the Responsive Education Program"; Chapter 6, Learner Objectives of the Responsive Education Program"; and Chapter 7, "Principles and Teaching Guidelines of the Responsive Education Program."

Each goal has a set of learner objectives.

For each goal, a set of learner objectives expresses desired learner outcomes. The objectives for the development of problem-solving abilities are that learners:

1. Take initiative in formulating and addressing questions or problems in need of resolution.

2. Use problem-solving processes to acquire academic skills, and use these skills and other abilities to gather information, generate ideas, and evaluate ideas for effective and appropriate solutions.

3. Act to solve problems effectively and appropriately.

The objectives for the development of healthy self-concept are that learners:

1. Use their own ideas and values.

2. Work effectively within limits and draw on available resources when solving problems.

3. Express feelings authentically and appropriately.

4. Acknowledge their strengths and weaknesses, take credit for their accomplishments, and give others credit for their accomplishments.

The objectives for the development of culturally pluralistic attitudes and behaviors are that learners:

1. Know about their ethnic/cultural group and like and contribute to their ethnic/cultural group.

2. Know about other ethnic/cultural groups and respect and interact productively with people of other ethnic and cultural groups.

3. Know about their own and others' relationship to society and work with others to uphold human rights and achieve social justice.

A set of principles describes the conditions of a learning environment that supports the achievement of the goals and objectives. The principles provide direction and focus for Responsive teaching. They are:

A set of principles describes the conditions of a learning environment that supports the goals and objectives.

1. The learners' experience, backgrounds, and interests are assets.

2. Learners develop increasing responsibility for and control of their own learning.

3. Learners acquire skills and concepts in the context of meaningful, integrated learning experiences.

4. Learners share knowledge, and experience and interact on issues.

Learner and Teacher Roles

As we observe the children in the two classrooms we will visit, we will see:

Learners make choices, set goals, solve problems, ask questions, and use others as resources.

- Children discovering facts about themselves, about others, and about their own and others' relationship to society.

- Children making choices and decisions within clear and consistent limits.

- Children posing and solving personal, interactional, and cognitive problems.

- Children initiating ideas, setting goals, evaluating their work, and taking credit for their work.

- Children developing problem-solving abilities, including academic skills, during learning experiences that draw on their experience, background and interests and that present or simulate real-life situations.

- Children asking questions to clarify feelings and thoughts and solve problems.

- Children integrating (finding personal meaning in) learning experiences.

- Children using each other as resources.

- Children working, at different times, alone, with partners, and in groups.

- Children keeping their own records of their activities and progress.

Teachers observe learners, plan, guide problem solving, and provide appropriate choices.

As we observe the teachers, teacher assistants, and parent volunteer, we will also notice:

- Adults sharing responsibility and planning with other adults.

- Adults modeling problem-solving behaviors and the use of others as resources.

- Adults gaining information about children to plan appropriate learning activities; adults keeping records on children's cognitive, affective, and psychomotor development and accomplishments.

- Adults providing opportunities for children to learn through experimentation and discovery and to make their own decisions.

- Adults giving clear directions, responding to children's ideas, and asking questions that help children clarify a situation, problem, feeling, or interaction.

- Adults providing choices of materials and activities that enable children to work at their own pace and level and in their own style.

- Adults modifying the curriculum or schedule to suit the children's interests and needs.

- Adults working with children to set limits and identify the consequences of behaviors; adults helping children use negative feelings in socially acceptable ways.

- Adults posing real-life problems and issues to children from a variety of ethnic perspectives.

- Adults providing opportunities for integration of learning experiences and for transference of knowledge to new situations.

## Classroom Examples

The particular classrooms described here are a combined kindergarten and first-grade classroom and a combined second- and third-grade classroom. In the first, curriculum areas are usually presented in the context of a single project or theme (e.g., making a post office); the function of different room areas varies according to the current project. In the second, general curriculum areas (e.g., language and social studies) are scheduled for specific times of day, and the room contains learning centers related to curriculum areas. Other age groupings, approaches to curriculum areas, and room arrangements are possible in a Responsive classroom.*

Various age groupings, approaches to curriculum areas, and room arrangements are possible in Responsive classrooms.

We will spend only an hour in each classroom and thus will get only a glimpse of a full day's activities. Before and after we visit each classroom, we will meet with the teacher to find out about the teacher's approach, previous activities, and plans for follow-up activities. The time of the visit is mid-February.**

## I. Classroom #1

We will first visit the kindergarten and first-grade classroom. On the afternoon before the day we will observe the children, we meet the teacher in the classroom to talk about her approach and the activities that have led up to the activities we will observe.[1]

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*Chapter 8, "Language and Reading in the Responsive Education Program," presents another example of a Responsive classroom. The classroom is a combined kindergarten to third-grade classroom. The approach to curriculum areas and room arrangement is similar to that of the first classroom described in this chapter, but the children are more independent and require less structure.

**In the Introduction and Part III of this chapter, the marginal phrases summarize the content of the text. In Parts I and II, the marginal phrases analyze the ways the Responsive goals, objectives, and principles are being implemented in the classrooms described.

## Background

Observer: "How many adults and children do you have in the classroom?"

The teacher shares planning and responsibility with other adults.

Teacher: "We have 30 students, a teacher assistant, and a parent volunteer who comes in twice a week. The assistant and I and the parent meet after class to evaluate the day's activities and plan new activities."

Observer: "What kind of approach do you use?"

Teacher: "We often focus on a single project, in which children learn and use skills in several different curriculum areas while working on the project. We designate areas of the room for different aspects of the project; the children may work in any area that is appropriate to the activity they are undertaking. Children work in small groups most of the time, often on different aspects of the class-wide project. They also work alone and in large groups some of the time. In both small groups and large groups, we try to individualize experiences for different children."

Children work in a variety of groups.

Observer: "Do you have a set schedule?"

Teacher: "We set a schedule each day that specifies time periods for particular activities. If other important activities develop spontaneously, we adjust the schedule. We can be flexible as we stay with the school's rules of having snack time at 10:00, recess at 10:30, and lunch at 11:45. We usually begin the day with a large-group sharing time, followed by small-group activities, snack time, and recess. Between recess and lunch we have rest-time and music for the whole group. After lunch the children usually listen to stories in small groups, and then have time for making the day's activities personally meaningful [integration].

"When you arrive tomorrow morning we will be having a sharing time, if the children are ready for it and seem to want it, and then small-group activities."

## Room Arrangement

As we look around the room, we note that one corner is a block area and another is a quiet area with a rug, a sofa, pillows, magazines, and books, including books that the children have made from stories they have written or dictated to adults.

Other areas of the room are designated for dress-up play and drama, for puzzles and word games, and for listening to records and tapes. The teacher tells us that no more than five children may be in an area at one time, as a general rule. A smaller area designated as a private area, which contains a rug, a blanket, and some pillows has space for only one or two children at a time. Other areas of the room contain chairs and small tables grouped in various arrangements; the teacher tells us that the arrangements can be changed to suite different activities and projects.

The room arrangement is flexible and has a private area for those who need or want it.

Materials for activities are stored on low shelves that the children can reach. One set of shelves contains an individually labelled storage space for each child. A display area in the back of the room contains books, pictures, and reports written or dictated by the children about the accomplishments of people of different ethnic groups.

Each child has a personal storage space.

On one wall of the room we see crayon drawings of children's families. The words "tallest" and "shortest" indicate the tallest and shortest members of the family. On the bottom of the drawings, each family member is numbered with a numeral and a word (e.g., "1, one"). Another wall displays the slogan "Things go better with coke," and a variation, "things go better with cake," above children's drawings of cakes and cokes.

Children have opportunities to:
- learn about their own and other ethnic groups
- use familiar content to acquire mathematics and reading skills.
- express negative feelings in appropriate ways.

A bulletin board entitled "Express Your Anger" contains some scribbles, a drawing of a child hitting with a hammer, and a collage made of torn paper.

Previous Classroom Activities

Observer: "What activities have led up to the ones we will see?"

Teacher: "Many of the children's recent activities have been related to our post office project. The topic arose when some of the children were talking about receiving valentines in the mail from grandparents and friends. They wanted to know how they could get letters from far away, and we spent part of a day talking about mailing letters. That discussion led into a discussion about the post office. Then the assistant, the children and I planned a trip to the post office.

Learning experiences are developed from the children's interests and needs.

At times children plan activities with the teacher and assistant.

"After the trip, several children asked if they could have a post office in the classroom. We talked about the project during a sharing time, and the children identified and chose different activities. Some of them worked on making a mailbox out of a cardboard box and painting it. Others made pictures of mailboxes on which they wrote U.S. Mail. During the week others built a post office out of boxes and blocks for use during dramatic play. Another group made stamps for use in the post office."

Record-Keeping and Planning

Observer: "How do you know what children are doing in a project like this?"

Children help in keeping records.

Teacher: "Children keep some records themselves by putting their names on cards that identify the activities they have participated in. They put the cards into a box with a slot and I pick them up and record the children's activities in my book at the end of the day. As the assistant and I work with children on projects, we assess and record what skills children are able to use. We use simple checklists and anecdotal records. If we find that a child is missing an academic skill we consider important, we design an activity that builds on the child's interests and will help him and others focus on that skill."

Adults assess children in a variety of ways and use the assessments as a basis for planning.

Description of Classroom Activities

At times children's ideas are used in spontaneous learning experiences.

As we enter the classroom, the children are assembling for their large-group sharing time. One child has brought a turtle to show the class. The teacher tells us that she has decided to use the turtle as the basis for a group activity today.

Children explore cause-and-effect relationships.

The boy with the turtle tells the group that the turtle will die if it is poked or squeezed. The teacher gives the children an opportunity to ask questions about the turtle and to observe it. She then asks the children each to think of and draw pictures of something that would make the turtle comfortable and something that would scare the turtle.[2] While the children are drawing, the teacher and assistant take dictation from children who want to dictate a statement about each picture. Children then choose partners and show their pictures and read or tell their statement to their partners. The teacher tells the children they will be able to use their pictures and statements in a lesson the next day.

It is now time for small-group activities. The teacher tells the children that they may choose to listen to a story or to continue work on the post office. One group will make mailbags for picking up and delivering mail. A second group will make money for use in the post office, and a third group will write letters and make envelopes for their letters. A fourth group will listen to a story read by the parent. Each group will have a limit of seven children. The teacher asks the children to indicate their choices by raising their hands as she names each activity; some children get their first choice and some get their second choice.

Children make choices and decisions within clear limits.

The teacher tells us she plans to work with the letter-writing group and with individual children in all of the groups. The assistant says she will spend most of her time with the group making money and will check on the group making mailbags.

The parent goes into the quiet corner and one boy climbs on her lap. The others cluster around her. A child shows the parent a book that he has brought from home and asks her to read it; several other children say that they would also like to hear the story. Before she begins to read, the parent asks the children to look at the picture on the cover and guess what the story is about. As she reads the story, she holds the book in a position that enables the children to see the printed text. She sometimes pauses and asks the children to guess the next word or the next event in the story.

An adult uses content that is important to a child.

Children learn the problem-solving strategy of predicting written language.

The mailbag group is working independently, making individual bags from white butcher paper. The teacher has asked them to make the kind they would like to have if they were mail carriers, and they are painting the bags with bright colors. At one point the assistant joins the group and asks the children to talk about the ways their bags resemble and differ from real mail-bags. The children record their statements on a tape recorder.

Children work independently at times.

Children compare fantasy and reality.

The children making money cut circles out of thin cardboard in sizes proportional to the sizes of real coins, and cover the circles with aluminum foil, except for the penny. As they work, the assistant picks up three "coins," the dime, the nickel, and the penny, and asks the children if they know the names of the coins.

Children learn mathematics skills in the context of practical use of the skills.

The adult guides discovery learning.

One child says the smallest coin is a penny, the next size is a nickel and the next size is a dime. Another child says that he thinks the smallest is the dime and that it is the same as ten pennies and that the biggest is a nickel and it is the same as five pennies. The assistant asks both children to look at a chart that displays labelled pictures of coins and check which is correct. Another child asks why the coin for five pennies is bigger than the coin for ten pennies. The assistant says she never did know the answer to that.

The adult is willing to admit that she doesn't know the answer.

Children practice reading and writing skills in a real-life situation.

In the letter-writing group, some children are writing real words; others are using scribble writing that they "read" to partners by telling what the scribbles mean. One girl says "mmmm" as she scribbles.

*Children's scribbles provide opportunities for reading, writing, and self-expression.*

Teacher provides an activity for children at different levels of development.

Children use their ethnic background and past experience in learning, and use one another as resources.

She recognizes an "m" in her scribble and shows it to another child. One girl says that she wants to write a letter to a friend in Puerto Rico who doesn't speak English and asks what she should do. The teacher asks her to get together with two other children and decide what can be done. One child suggests writing a letter in Spanish. The girl says that she doesn't know how to do so, but then says that she dictate a letter in English to the teacher and then take the letter home and ask her mother to write some of the Spanish words. She dictates to the teacher, "Dear Maria, I don't like it here when I miss you and Antonio and mangoes and my kitty. Love, Angelica."

The children make envelopes for the letters they write and the teacher poses a problem for the children to discuss: "What can you do if you don't know an address or zip code?" The children also bring up a problem: "What do you do if your letter is heavier than the others?" One child says that you'd have to pay more, and another remembers that a clerk at the post office they visited weighed letters and packages to determine the cost of postage. A third child suggests using the classroom scales to weigh their letters, and goes to get it.

Children pose and solve meaningful problems.

A child from this group begins to move around the room, disturbing other groups. Another child joins him and suddenly they begin to wrestle with each other. The teacher walks over and bends to their level and tells them quietly but firmly, "I don't want you to disturb the group. Wrestling is not allowed in this room. I can see there is a problem here, but I can't help you solve it now because I'm working with this group. I'll help you with it before recess. For now, you have a choice of working in a group and keeping with the rules of the group or sitting at separate tables and drawing a picture of the way you would like to fight but may not." One child balks, then sullenly goes to a table. He hides what he is drawing. The other child joins the parent's reading group and continues to disrupt it. The teacher goes to him and tells him now he must sit and work by himself.

Teacher clearly states limits and specifies a time when she will help children resolve their problem.

Children make choices within limits and take responsibility for their behavior.

After ten minutes, the child who has been drawing brings the teacher a picture of two boys. One has his arm raised with a large fist; the other has fallen over. The teacher asks whether he would like to write a statement about this picture. The child says he would not, but he would like to put it on the wall with other pictures of "Express Your Anger."

A child expresses negative feelings appropriately using art and writing skills.

A child has an opportunity to say "no" appropriately and to take credit by showing his work.

During recess, we ask the teacher about her plans to follow-up activities and about variation on the activities we have seen.

Follow-Up Activities and Variations

Observer: "What are your plans for follow-up activities?"

Teacher: "At the end of the day I plan to ask the children to meet in a large group and think about what they did that they liked and what they didn't

Children have an opportunity to integrate by bringing together parts of their experience and evaluating what is personally important.

like during the morning.. I will give them a choice of drawing pictures of what they liked and didn't like, talking in small groups, recording statements on the tape recorder, or writing or dictating statements with others, if they are willing.

The teacher provides opportunities for children to transfer what has been learned to other situations.

"Tomorrow, to follow up on the experience with the turtle, I will ask the children to think about when they themselves feel comfortable or scared and what makes them feel that way. On the next day, I will ask them to think in the same way about a person at home or in their neighborhood. The next step will be a discussion of various ways of helping others feel comfortable and of what to do when others are scared. This kind of sequence helps the children transfer what they have learned in one situation to other situations. I also view this topic as a good way of dealing with cause-and-effect relationships.

"As a follow up to the post-office activities, the assistant and I will plan with the children some dramatic-play activities in which children play postal customers and clerks selling stamps, making postmarks, or weighing letters. This activity will help them put into practice some of the skills and concepts they have been learning."3

*Children have an opportunity to read their own natural language in small groups with the teacher.*

Observer: "What are some other projects and activities you might have?"

Teacher: "Another project could be a toy store department or a grocery store. As in the post office project, the activities could include a number of curriculum areas--for instance, mathematics, as the children learn to make change; reading and writing, and social studies, as they discuss talking to people who speak different dialects or languages.

We leave this kindergarten and first-grade classroom and walk down the hall to a second- and third-grade classroom.

## II. Classroom #2

As we enter the classroom, we find that all the children have left the room to play outside during morning recess, except for five who are reading and writing together at a table in a corner. (The teacher tells us that these children chose to stay inside because they were excited about the task they were working on, but-that he does pay attention to the fact that they need physical exercise.) We take the opportunity to talk to the teacher and look at the classroom.

### Background

Observer: "How many adults and children are in the classroom?"

Teacher: "There are 30 seven- and eight-year-old boys and girls, a teacher, and a teacher assistant. Parent volunteers sometimes work in the classroom. The teacher assistant has been in the program for five years, at first as a parent and later as an assistant. I have been teaching for five years, but have been in the program for only two years."

Observer: "What kind of approach do you use?"

Teacher: "Our approach is subject-matter focused. We schedule general curriculum areas for certain times of day--usually language and social studies in the morning and mathematics and science in the afternoon. All children work in the same subject area at the same time, but each takes his or her own focus. Our content comes mostly from the questions and interests expressed by the children. For instance, the five children over in the language and social

Learning Experiences are based on the children's interests and experience.

*Children share experiences.*

studies center are working on a project they began this morning; finding out about and writing stories and reports on this city and other cities. The project came about because one of the children found out she was going to move in the summer to a city in another state. I overheard a group of the children talking about how they hated moving and disliked the other city. I asked them what they didn't like about the city, where they heard or learned the statements they made, if they knew whether the statements were true, and how they could find out whether they were true. Some other children have also become interested in this activity and have decided to work individually on finding out about places they had heard about on television and read about in story books.

The teacher poses open-ended questions that help children build on their ideas and knowledge.

"Another group has been writing a play about Harriet Tubman during language and social studies time. This group plans to get together with a group that has been making puppets and put on a show for the class. They are using a book from the library as a guide and I meet with them once a week to check their progress and to be a resource.

"I have set times for certain subject areas because it is easier for me to work that way with the children right now. However, I believe that the children will use their skills anywhere in the room and whenever they are mentally active. For instance, although the language and social studies period focuses on the acquisition of reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills, in the context of issues and topics suggested by the children, I realize that

Academic skills are learned and practiced in all classroom areas and activities.

communication goes on all the time and that the children will be reading, writing, listening and speaking while solving a math or science problem or reading in the library or making an art project."

Observer: "How do you work with children?"

Teacher: "We work with children individually in small special-interest groups, and in large groups. I generally introduce new topics during group time after morning recess. We discuss the topic, pose questions, and then decide how we will approach the solution. The children work on the task individually or in groups. The assistant and I are resources, facilitators, and clarifiers. We meet with each of the children once a week to discuss their progress and expectations, verify our observations and assessments, and help them plan the next steps. These conferences are give-and-take meetings; the children ask us questions, too.

Teachers help children develop responsibility and have some control over their own learning.

"We also work individually with children who are learning how to pace themselves and select their own focus. We help them set their focus and choose activities during the weekly conferences, and we try to provide special-interest tasks and choices of appropriate activities in the learning centers. For instance, we have put in the learning centers activity cards that are color coded by level of difficulty. The cards suggest activities by posing open-ended questions, such as 'How many ways can you think of _____?' 'What would happen if _____?' 'Why do you think _____did_____?' The children can approach the task in their own way or select an approach from one of the three we suggest on the back of the card. The cards also enable children to evaluate their own progress by recording their solutions and answers. These task cards are optional, and many of the children have moved past the need for them most of the time."

Learners have choices of appropriate activities.

Observer: "What kind of planning do you do?"

Teachers plan carefully but are flexible.

Teacher: "We believe in planning carefully but being flexible enough to use the children's spontaneous ideas and questions whenever they are appropriate. We do a lot of preparation and planning. For instance, before a book goes into the library, we review it to make sure that it doesn't reflect ethnic stereotypes of any kind; is enjoyable; and supports the children's pride in themselves and their cultures

Materials are selected to promote healthy self-concept and cultural pluralism.

or give them accurate information about other cultures. We also look for books that reinforce the concepts being learned in other areas of the room.

As a basis for planning, teachers observe children's interests, learning styles, and levels of development.

"We try to provide activities and materials that will encourage children to ask questions and seek their own answers, and acquire skills they need. As a basis for planning, we observe and record the children's interests, learning styles, and levels of development. We assess skills in the context of practical and meaningful use. For instance, when the children write, read or tape record their own stories, we assess their grasp of word meaning and sentence structure."

Room Arrangement

Each child has a personal work and storage place.

We notice that the center area of the room contains individual child-size desks grouped in fours. The teacher tells us each child has his or her own desk for storing personal items and for working on individual tasks. During activity times, children may work either at their desks or in a group in one of the three learning centers.

The learning centers--the language and social studies center, the mathematics and science center, and the book corner--occupy three corners of the room. They are sectioned off by low room dividers that display children's work. In each we see a low table surrounded by four to six chairs and low shelves on which materials are stored. In the fourth corner of the room, the teacher's desk partially blocks off a small area that the teacher calls the "private area." It contains two stuffed pillows and a clipboard on the floor. Hanging on a hook by the entrance to the area are cards that say "occupied" and "vacant." The teacher tells us that the area is used a lot on some days and not at all on others. "The children like to read alone in there or write secret letters (seven- and eight-year olds love secrets), or just take a well-needed catnap. They can do that in there without disturbing the class or letting me know. It is not a study area, but it can be used for that purpose if the children wish."

The classroom has a private space for those who want or need to be alone.

Children experience freedom within clear, consistant limits.

On the walls we see pictures of the children, examples of their written work and art work, pictures that illustrate various topics, and a calendar on which the children have marked dates, days of the week, and birthdays. A bulletin board displays a

skeleton of the daily schedule, into which the daily or weekly content can be inserted:

| | |
|---|---|
| 8:55-9:15 | Free-choice period, small-group meetings with teacher and assistant |
| 9:20-10:25 | Language and social studies |
| 10:30-10:55 | Snack and recess |
| 11:00-11:05 | Attendance, lunch count |
| 11:10-11:45 | Large-group activity |
| 11:50-12:50 | Lunch |
| 12:55-1:10 | Quiet activity and teacher/child conferences |
| 1:15-2:10 | Mathematics and science |
| 2:15-2:35 | Recess |
| 2:40-2:55 | Integration of day's activity and teacher/child conferences |
| 2:55-3:05 | Preparation for going home and songfest. |

Observer: "What happens during the free-choice period and small-group meetings?"

Teacher: "Many of the children have grown to be fairly independent workers and others generally need me or the assistant to help them get started each day. Therefore, we use the first twenty minutes of the day to meet with children who need help in setting their focus, while those who can pace themselves may choose or continue games, reading, or other projects. Sometimes we just share ideas and news in a group. Children can leave or join the group whenever they wish. It is a good time for me to sense the children's moods and any problems and concerns from home. We help them decide what they will work on during the language and social studies period that follows. At least once a week a group meets with the teacher assistant during this time to review the books they have read and make recommendations about which books they want to keep longer and what other books they want to add to the library."

Teacher provides appropriate opportunities for children to take responsibility for their own learning.

Teacher respects children's feelings, ideas, and values.

The book corner is furnished with a rug, a large stuffed chair, and several pillows, in addition to a table and other chairs. As we thumb through the books on the low shelves, we note that they range from fiction to autobiography and reflect a variety of lifestyles and ethnic groups. The teacher tells us that the books come from the city library and the children's homes as well as the school library, and that he and the assistant try to make sure that the book corner contains at least one book per child at all times. On the table are a listening post with three earphones, a record player, a rack containing story records and books, a tape recorder, and tapes that the children have made of their own stories, poems, and "knock-knock" jokes.

The children's backgrounds and interests are respected and viewed as assets.

Language skills are reinforced in a variety of ways.

In the mathematics and science center, a rule posted on the wall catches our eye: "Decide on a question you want to answer while in the center and keep track of what you did to answer it." We notice on the low shelves a variety of materials that the children could use to construct science experiments or solve mathematics problems: prisms, magnifying glasses, string, pencils, batteries, a hot plate, a sauce pan, a measuring cup and measuring spoons, a tape knife, wire and a wire cutter, a hammer and nails, eyedroppers, plastic bowls of different sizes, cuisenaire rods, wooden beads, buttons of different sizes, and a set of scales.

Children are guided to take a focus, and start and complete a task.

Children of this age learn best by manipulating concrete objects.

The teacher tells us that he introduced the topic of air last week and that the children decided to find out about some of the things that air could and could not do. One project is making a rocket; we see a drawing of a design for a rocket, a partly-finished rocket, a set of scales and some weights. For another project, we see pinwheels and a card on which a child has written "Will air turn this paper wheel faster than the cardboard one?"

Children learn concepts through solving problems.

Children pose and solve their own questions.

In the language and social studies center, we see five children who stayed in from recess writing in books made from construction paper and tablet paper. As we peek over their shoulders, we note that one child is making a list of what he knows about the city in which he lives. Another has finished his list and is marking which things he likes and which he dislikes. Two others who seem to have finished this part of the project are looking through a brochure on San Francisco.

Reading and writing skills are acquired in the context of meaningful activities.

One child says, "Man, I would like to ride a cable car." The other says, "Okay, let's put it in

the book on things we like about San Francisco. Another child, who is making a map of San Francisco, says, "No, not yet! Let's see if everybody likes 'em and what you do on 'em." Another says, "Do we have cable cars here?" "No, silly," says another. They begin to read the book on cable cars together as we walk away to ask the teacher one last question before the children return.

Children have an opportunity to experience cooperative group learning.

Observer: "What rules do you have for the centers?"

Teacher: "Well, you saw one posted in the science area. The rule for the private area is that only one child may be there at a time. A child may stay there up to an hour, and then must give it up to someone else. One general rule for the centers is that only four to six children may work in an area at a time. Another is that you must respect another person's work. You may not tamper with or destroy another person's project, materials, or possessions. Another rule is that you must clean up your own mess and put materials and equipment back in their proper place. The children understand these rules because they helped set them up. The consequences for breaking them vary according to the situation."

Children have clear, consistent standards and are helped to take responsibility for their own behavior.

Description of Classroom Activity

The children return from recess very excited about a discussion some of them had had outside with the teacher assistant. They explain to the teacher that on the way to school this morning, some of them passed a funeral procession. All but one of the children crossed their fingers before and while they looked at the hearse. The children all said that the child who did not cross his fingers would have bad luck. The child in question said that he wouldn't have bad luck if he didn't believe in it, and that his mother said that crossing your fingers was superstitious and that he was not to believe in such things. The group brought the question to the teacher assistant to resolve at recess. By the time they finished telling her about it, it was time to go in.

Children are exposed to a new perspective on their values.

While the children are settling in their seats, we hear the teacher and assistant decide that instead of having movement during group time today, they will build on this idea and help the children resolve the question. The teacher asks the teacher assistant if she would like to lead the discussion since she was a part of the group outside. The assistant answers,

The teacher uses a spontaneous idea of the children for problem solving and concept development.

"No, because I cross my fingers as the children did and I would not be able to stay neutral." The teacher says "Okay," and turns to the group.

A child has an opportunity to practice language and mathematics skills in the context of functional use, and take responsibility.

One of the children brings over a chart on which names of the children are printed, and sets it up at the front of the room. The child points to each name on the chart and calls it out. As their names are called, the children answer and say whether they are buying lunch today. There is no answer to three of the names, and the child calling the roll puts a red check beside the names. The teacher says, "Jake, when you finish adding up how many people are here and how many are absent today, please put the count on my desk. Take the lunch count to the cafeteria."

Children may make decisions about their own learning.

The teacher then says, "Some of you were talking outside today during recess. It sounds like a very interesting discussion. So, instead of having movement now, we are going to talk some more about it. After you hear what the topic is, those of you who are not interested may go to the library or work on your valentine project. Who would like to tell us about the discussion?" One child does, and when he finishes, two boys leave their seats and go to the library. The other children stay in their seats.

The teacher asks the group, "What is superstition?" The child who refused to cross his fingers answers, "Superstition is when people believe in doing silly things to keep bad things from happening to them."

Children share knowledge and ideas.

"How many of you do things to keep bad things from happening to you?" asks the teacher. Most of the children raise their hands. "Let's go around the group and have each of you tell us one thing you do," says the teacher. Several children say that they don't step on a crack in the sidewalk. The teacher asks why. The children answer that if you do, you will break your mother's back. Another child says he broke a mirror when he was seven years old and then didn't get his dirt bike for his birthday.

The teacher helps children extend and build on their ideas.

"Okay," says the teacher, "can you think of any things that your relatives do that you think are superstitious?" The children think for a moment. The child who refused to cross his fingers this morning asks, "Is it superstitious when your grandmother won't let you throw your hair in the trash?" The teacher answers, "I don't know, John, why does she tell you

not to throw your hair in the trash?" "Because she says a bird will get it and make a nest in my head," says John.

"Well, see if it fits our definition of superstition," says the teacher. John pauses, then answers, "Yes, 'cause somethin' bad will happen to me if I don't do what she says."

The teacher guides a child through a problem-solving process that leads him to discover the answer to his own question.

"Yes, I think that it falls in the same category as the other superstitions we have been talking about," says the teacher. "How can you find out about other superstitions your grandmother might have?" A girl raises her hand. The teacher asks, "John, do you want an idea from Kathy?" John answers that he does. Kathy suggests, "You can ask her." The teacher says, "Does that seem reasonable to you, John?" John nods his head.

Children are encouraged to use each other as resources.

"I think that is a very good idea for all of us to use," says the teacher. "Between now and Friday, ask your family and friends about their superstitions, and we will make a list of what they are and what is supposed to happen to you if you don't do them." The children say they would like to do this. The teacher continues, "We have a few minutes before lunch. You may choose a partner and begin to make a list together of your superstitions, or you may draw a picture of someone carrying out one of your superstitions, or you may write a sentence about what you liked about this discussion and a sentence about what you did not like."

The teacher helps the children clarify and integrate what has occurred.

The teacher leaves the children to work on their chosen tasks and we ask him two last questions about follow up and variations.

*Children share and discover with one another*

## Follow-Up Activities and Variations

Observer: "What are your plans for follow-up activities?"

Children have opportunities to take credit for their accomplishments.

Teacher: "To follow up on the mathematics and science experiments, the children will write reports for a class year book we are making. We have also started to plan a trip to the airport to talk to the aviationist about air and aviation. Some of the children are really interested in flying and are very excited planning the trip. I hope this interest leads us to discovering how aviation relies on mathematics.

Teacher poses questions that enable children to extend knowledge and social consciousness.

"As a follow up on the social studies project, we plan to ask children to look at the things they dislike about the new city. We intend to pose such questions as, 'If you could change the things you did not like, what would you change and why? If you changed them, what would the people there gain or lose and what do you think the people would say about these changes?'

"With the children who have started to think about 'superstition,' we will look at customs and habits in other lands, perhaps even look at the superstitions in fairy tales, and have the children ask their families about their beliefs. I see a lot of potential in this subject because the children are so interested in it and because it can lead to many new concepts and skills."

Observer: "What are some other activities you might have?"

Teacher: "Instead of a project on 'Where We Would Like To Live,' the children could investigate the issue of what is it like to move to a new city. This project could include discovering how you make new friends, what you need to know about the new city to survive, what if you don't speak the language, how to buy food and find shelter, and so forth."

## III. Some Questions and Answers about "Responsive" Teaching

In this section, we try to answer some questions that may have been suggested by the preceding descriptions of classrooms.

Question: What happens if a teacher is not able to teach "responsively" in all the ways that have been described?

Answer: The Responsive Education Program assumes that teachers may be at various levels of development toward becoming "responsive," and accepts teachers where they are with the idea that they are moving along a continuum. One of the conditions of being in the program is being willing to move along a continuum at a rate that is appropriate for the individual and the program. For instance, if a teacher uses a text in a particular curriculum area, she may be using it precisely as it is written at the beginning. As she moves along the continuum, at midpoint she may be using the text as written half the time and adapting it to the children's experience half the time. On the higher end of the continuum, the teacher would form her own curriculum from various sources, teaching skills that have been identified in the text, but making her own plans for ways of teaching those skills "responsively." A teacher's rate of growth toward becoming "responsive" depends on the amount of time and energy the individual is able or willing to invest, the amount of support offered, the individual's past experience and the amount of change required or desired.

The program assumes that teachers are moving on a continuum toward becoming "responsive."

Question: What can I do if I am the only full-time adult in the classroom?

Answer: Parents or other volunteers from the community may be willing to help in the classroom. If there are no outside resources, a teacher would need to set up a classroom with the grouping that he or she could best handle. It is possible to individualize teaching in large-group situations as well as in small-group situations. Some teachers in the program have said that they have found it important to help the children learn to work in groups independently. This approach would be particularly important for teachers who have no assistant.

It is possible to teach "responsively" even if the classroom contains only one adult.

Question: Is it desirable to have learning centers? What is the best way to use them?

Answer: There are no hard-and-fast rules about having learning centers. Some teachers find them useful, others do not. What is important is how they are used.

An advantage of having learning centers is that children have an opportunity to work in small groups

Learning centers can provide children opportunities to work in small groups to share ideas and get individual attention.

to share ideas and get individual attention. Some teachers who want to move to using learning centers have begun by setting up one center at a time. Both the teacher and the children should know beforehand how the teacher will provide appropriate choices of independent activities (e.g., through activity cards or verbal assignments) and what the rules for the center are. Some teachers who are in the middle range of a continuum have worked with small groups most of the time in centers associated with specific curriculum areas (e.g., language, mathematics). At the high end of a continuum, teachers have designated centers for particular projects rather than curriculum areas. Such projects may draw on skills in a variety of curriculum areas (e.g., in a science project on electricity, children may use writing, reading, spelling, mathematics, social studies, and artwork as well as science). A child may bring to the center any materials and content that are appropriate for the project.

An ineffective way of using centers would be to use them consistently for teaching in ability groups. We believe that having opportunities to work in a variety of groups (e.g., with others of the same ability, with others of different abilities, in large groups, in small groups) enables children to learn from others whose abilities are different from their own and to learn to use others as resources. Working with children in various groupings requires accurate record-keeping and a high degree of organization and takes time to learn. The Responsive Education Program encourages teachers to move toward flexible grouping, with or without use of learning centers, at a pace that makes sense to them.

Question: Is it necessary to have a set schedule?

Answer: The classroom schedule may be partly based on limitations set by the district or school. It should also be based on children's needs, interests and attention span, and the teacher's needs. Some teachers may work best by scheduling curriculum areas for particular times, or be required to do so by the school. Others may prefer to have a project that draws on several curriculum areas and runs throughout the day, allowing children to choose different activities related to the project. It is important for a teacher to provide a balance between periods of concentration and release of energy in movement throughout the day, and to offer children opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning.

The schedule should be based on the needs of the teacher and the children, as well as on school requirements.

Question: How is discipline handled in the Responsive Education Program?

Answer: Teachers seek to help children take responsibility for their behavior by establishing clear and consistent limits and meaningful consequences of behavior, and having children participate in setting some of the limits and consequences. They try to provide opportunities to express negative feelings in alternative, socially acceptable ways, and help children solve personal and interactional problems. "Responsive" teachers do not demean, threaten, publicly reprimand, or hit children.

The teacher establishes clear and consistent limits, and provides opportunities for expressing negative feelings in socially acceptable ways.

In setting limits, a teacher would consider what rules are needed for the health, safety, and effective functioning of the children, and what rules are needed for the teacher's own effective function in the classroom, it may be appropriate for the children to participate in setting limits and consequences. The limits and consequences should be clearly understood by the teacher and children.

Children share in planning some of the rules for the classroom and learn to take responsibility for their actions.

When a child is disruptive, there are several Responsive ways to handle the concern. For example, a teacher may matter-of-factly state the rules and the choices of alternatives and/or consequences. A child who is disrupting a group may be given a choice of staying with the group and following the rules, or going to another table and drawing a picture of what he or she would like to do. For a child who is hitting another child, an appropriate alternative may be one that requires physical exertion, such as pounding or squeezing clay. The child may rejoin the group when he or she is ready to follow the rules of the group. Sometimes it may be appropriate for a disruptive child to read or work alone for a while. There is no way of dealing with discipline problems that is right for all children or even for the same child all of the time. A teacher needs to know the children well in order to decide what is appropriate for a particular situation. A curriculum that is meaningful to the children lessens problems of discipline. Guiding behavior is always done within a problem-solving process.

Question: How do you reward children for their accomplishments and good behavior?

Answer: We believe that teachers should acknowledge children's accomplishments and good behavior, but the rewards should come from within. A "responsive" teacher tries to help children acknowledge and

Teachers help children acknowledge and take credit for their accomplishments.

take credit for their accomplishments by putting their work on display and providing opportunities for children to tell others of their accomplishments, if they wish to, and to celebrate them. Learning how to acknowledge and take credit for one's accomplishments contributes to the development of self-confidence and healthy self-concept.

Question: How do I actually go about becoming "responsive?" Is there a sequence? What is my first step?

Teacher build on their existing skills and knowledge.

Answer: Teachers may choose different starting points. We ask teachers to begin by using their existing skills and experience, and choosing one area that they would like to expand upon because they feel good about what they are doing already, or an area in which they would like to make some changes. (Examples of such areas are: guiding children to make decisions; flexible grouping of children; using some of children's own vocabulary to teach reading skills.) Then, with the help of a staff developer, a teacher may lay out a plan. This plan may include a classroom observation by the staff developer, with evaluation afterwards followed by a discussion of what aspects of the teacher's approach were "responsive" and what aspects could be changed.*

Question: How are parents involved in the classroom?

Parents participate in making decisions and setting goals.

Answer: Parents help bring the community to the classroom by sharing their interests and beliefs and ways of doing things. They have regular conferences with the teacher, the teacher assistant, and sometimes the child on the educational program. The parents, the teacher and the assistant, and the child share in making decisions that are based on each one's expectations and on the way the child will function in the classroom. Parents are encouraged to visit the classroom as observers and, if they wish, to work in the classroom as instructional aides in the areas of their strengths and interests.

Question: How do teachers report to parents?

Answer: Parents have individual conferences with the teacher. A parent-teacher conference is an

*For a more detailed discussion of staff development, see Chapter 10, "Staff Development in the Responsive Education Program."

interaction between parent and teacher rather than just a report by the teacher. In the conferences, teachers have often described children's activities and progress done by using anecdotal records, photographs, and children's logs or reports on their activities, drawings, writings, and scrapbooks. Parents also initiate some of the discussion, describing what the children are doing at home, expressing expectations and concerns, and making positive comments as well. Parents and teachers meet on a regular basis, so that a time of concern is not the only contact.

Parents and teachers pool their skills and knowledge.

Question: How do the teacher and teacher assistant function together in the classroom?

Answer: We view the teacher and teacher assistant as a team. Because the teacher is the more trained educator in the team and has the major responsibility, the teacher functions as a leader, supporting the teacher assistant in his or her effort to grow and to use his or her talents most effectively. The teacher assistant, in turn, functions as support to the teacher.

The teacher and the teacher assistant work as a team, and support and complement one another.

Notes

1. Some parts of this classroom were modified from observation and interviews with Harriet Wolfe, kindergarten Follow-Through teacher, Orvis Ring School, Reno, Nev.: Program Advisor, Brigitte Bartl; Director, Julia Maher.
2. Modification from observation and interview of classroom of Anne Smith and Joan Dodd, kindergarten teachers, Vista School, Albany, Calif.
3. Ideas from Harriet Wolfe, kindergarten Follow-Through teacher, Orvis Ring School, Reno, Nev.

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# 10 STAFF DEVELOPMENT IN THE RESPONSIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM

## Introduction

The role of the teacher* in a Responsive classroom is to respond to children in a way that supports the development of problem-solving abilities, of healthy self-concept, and of culturally pluralistic attitudes and behaviors. The teacher observes and learns about the children, and provides materials and activities and asks questions that guide children to learn new skills and concepts and solve problems. He or she respects the children's lifestyles, learning styles, and rate of growth, and establishes clear directions and limits. The teacher models problem-solving behaviors and the use of others as resources, establishes a climate of openness and trust, and supports interdependent learning.

In this chapter, we briefly describe how teachers develop the skills and ways of working that characterize Responsive teaching.** Part I discusses the Responsive Education Program's approach to staff development. Parts II and III provide two examples of staff development. Part II describes one teacher's experience from the point of view of the teacher; Part III describes the experiences of three teachers, from the point of view of a staff developer providing a staff development program for a group of teachers and teacher assistants.

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*"Teacher" refers both to teachers and to teacher assistants. For more detailed discussions of the role of the teacher, see Chapter 9, "Classroom Description of the Responsive Education Program"; Chapter 1, "Responsiveness Defined"; Chapter 6, "Objectives of the Responsive Education Program"; and the latter parts of Chapter 3, "Cognitive Development in the Responsive Education Program"; Chapter 4, "Healthy Self-Concept in the Responsive Education Program"; Chapter 5, "Cultural Pluralism in the Responsive Education Program"; and Chapter 8, "Language and Reading in the Responsive Education Program."

**A Staff Development Manual describing how to implement staff development in the Responsive Education Program will be available in November, 1976.

## I. The Responsive Education Program's Approach to Staff Development

The Responsive goals and principles apply to staff development as well as to the classroom.

Although adults' and children's learning differ in some respects, the approach used with adults is similar to the approach used with children, in the sense that it seeks to respond sensitively and appropriately to learners' experience and needs. Staff development seeks to support the three goals of the program--the development of problem-solving abilities, of healthy self-concept, and of culturally pluralistic attitudes and behaviors. It is guided by the four Responsive principles:

1. The learners' experience, background, and interests are assets.
2. Learners develop increasing responsibility for and control of their own learning.
3. Learners acquire skills and concepts in the context of meaningful, integrated learning experiences.
4. Learners share knowledge and experience and interact on issues.

Teachers have opportunities to set their own objectives for learning; to work at their own pace and in their own style; to build on their existing skills and experience; to assess their own progress (on the basis of their own records and self-observation or on the basis of observation and comments from other teachers and the staff developer); and to choose their modes of learning (e.g., working alone, working in groups, reading, using audio-visual aids, observing demonstrations, having regularly scheduled meetings with the staff developer, having meetings scheduled at the teacher's request).

A staff developer helps teachers set goals, acts as a resource, and provides inservice training.

Staff development is implemented by a staff developer. The staff developer may be a skills specialist, a school principal, or a person who has been specifically assigned to provide inservice training for teachers and teacher assistants.* The staff developer works with teachers to set individual objectives that are appropriate for the teachers and the children in their classrooms and consistent with the goals and

*In Follow Through Programs that have implemented the Responsive Education Program, the staff developer has been called a Program Advisor.

*Each teacher determines his or her own objectives for professional development. The staff developer provides the guidelines.*

objectives of the program of the school district*; acts as a resource for teachers; and provides inservice training in a variety of forms. These forms include:

1. Group and individual training workshops and consultations.

2. Reading materials (e.g., information about the program, books, journal articles).

3. Audio-visual materials (e.g., videotapes, films, slide sets, tape recordings).

Inservice training can take the form of
- workshops and consultations
- reading materials
- audio-visual materials
- classroom visits
- information about outside resources.

*The goals and objectives of school districts often concern the acquisition of academic skills (e.g., reading, mathematics); such objectives are narrower than those of the Responsive Education Program but may be compatible because the program's goals and objectives include the development of academic skills. We assume that school districts that adopt the program have determined that the district's goals are compatible with those of the program, and that teachers who join the program find its goals and approach compatible and can envision themselves moving toward Responsive skills and attitudes. See Chapter 12, "Implementation Guide."

4. Visits to classrooms for demonstrations, observation and feedback, and discussions of individual children or classroom materials and activities.

5. Provision of information about relevant workshops and seminars at local colleges and educational institutions.

Steps for Learning New Ways of Teaching

The Responsive process of learning a new way of teaching is based on the teacher or staff developer raising concerns or interests. It then takes the form of the following steps:

1. Clarify program expectations, set mutual effort, set goals, and establish a focus for learning.

2. Gather information about and/or experience the new way of teaching, and generate and evaluate plans for using it, and determine criteria for success.

3. Apply the new approach in classroom setting.

The steps can be illustrated by the following example of a teacher who wants to expand language development in her classroom from the use of basal reading texts to other activities.

The learner sets goals and takes a focus.

1. Clarify expectations, establish goals and focus. The teacher raises the question, "How can I use the children's natural language for language experiences?" The staff developer guides the teacher to establish criteria for providing meaningful experiences for learners by personal involvement in learning situations, making literature available and dialogue about other learning experiences that fit the criteria generated. The teacher decides she wants to start with taking dictation, and chooses to focus on the way that both basal texts and dictated stories are means of conveying messages through written language.

The learner experiences a new process and generates and evaluates ideas about it.

2. Gather information about and/or experience the new way of teaching and generate and evaluate ideas about using it. During an inservice workshop, the teacher and other teachers who want to learn to take dictation, practice dictation skills by dictating stories to each other about a weekend experience. As

they do so, they learn about setting up a dictation situation, recording accurately, and understanding the communication. The teachers identify what they have learned and discuss ways that they can use dictation in their classroom, scheduling, the materials required, and choosing appropriate topics. The teacher forms a plan for using dictation in her classroom and a guide for knowing when it is or is not going well.

The learner applies what has been learned to a new situation.

3. Apply new approach in classroom setting. The next step in learning occurs when the teacher uses the new way of teaching in the classroom. Then she assesses her own success, and generalizes the new skill to other situations, or, if there is a concern about the process, the teacher may work independently or with the staff developer to resolve the concern and try again.

The length of time needed for each step may vary according to the complexity of the subject and the individual's learning style, previous experience, and motivation. The steps may occur in a different order. For example, a learning experience may lead a teacher to recognize abilities he or she has already acquired, or a teacher may realize during the planning of a learning experience that a different goal could be achieved.

Adults' and children's learning is similar in that both
- have differing paces
- have differing learning styles
- need a safe and supportive environment
- need to evaluate and take credit for accomplishments.

Although a Responsive approach is used both in staff development and in the classroom, adults' and children's learning differ in some respects. It may be helpful to point out some of the similarities and differences.

## Similarities in Children's and Adults' Learning

Differing paces. Like children, adults may learn at different paces, depending on the complexity of the subject, the individual's familiarity with it, and the individual's particular rate of learning. The Responsive approach seeks to respect an individual's natural pacing. Teachers who are pushed to use techniques they are not ready to use may feel apprehensive or may resist change.

Differing learning styles. Like children, adults may also vary in their learning styles, or prefer different styles at different times. Some teachers like to learn by themselves and others like to work in groups; some prefer to learn by reading extensively and others by interacting and talking with other teachers. This variance is one reason why learners should have some control over their own learning.

Need for a supportive and safe environment. Both adults and children need a safe and supportive environment when they risk learning something new. For a teacher trying a new skill, the support could take the form of materials, the assistance of a peer or a staff developer, or moral support. For example, a teacher taking dictation from children for the first time would probably need the support of a clear lesson plan and a rehearsal with another adult beforehand. The teacher might also ask the staff developer to observe the dictation and discuss it later. Some teachers may prefer to try new skills on their own and discuss them later; such individuals must be able to refuse help when they believe they don't need it. A safe environment protects learners from the fear of making mistakes by guiding them to learn from mistakes instead of demeaning them for mistakes.

Need to evaluate and take credit for accomplishments. Learners need opportunities to evaluate and take credit for what they have learned in order to develop confidence to try other challenges. Acknowledgement of one's abilities and accomplishments is part of a healthy self-concept.

## Differences in Adults' and Children's Learning

Adults' learning differs from children's in that adults:
- can think more abstractly
- are more self-directing
- can use limits more readily.

Conceptual understanding. Adults have more ideas and experiences to use in learning, and they can use language and reason more abstractly. The abilities enable them to learn in more ways than children can. A teacher could learn a new teaching method by reading about it and using previous teaching experience to change an aspect of his or her teaching. Adults are usually more capable than children of generalizing from an experience (such as role-playing or simulation) and applying it to a new situation (e.g., the classroom).

Self-direction. Adults are more self-governing and self-determining than children. They are capable of making more responsible decisions about their learning and of being more responsible for evaluating results.

Use of limits. Adults have learned to use socially acceptable behaviors in groups and in one-to-one situations and usually do not need to be reminded to stay within rules and directions. In group learning situations, adults can be relied upon to maintain the group order in order to accomplish a task. Sometimes this characteristic is a disadvantage in that adults may be too ready to follow leaders. They may need to

be encouraged to define their own standards and limits for accomplishing their goals.

### Examples of Staff Development

In the following two sections of this chapter, we present several examples of teachers' experiences in staff development. Just as Responsive classrooms may vary, teachers' experiences in staff development may vary according to the teachers' learning styles and paces, the needs and interests of the teachers and the children in their classrooms, and requirements of the school district. The examples given are a few of many possible variations on the operation of the Responsive goals and principles and the steps of learning new methods of teaching.

## II. Example of a Teacher's Experience

In this section, we present an example of a teacher's experience in staff development from the point of view of the teacher.

### Background

Donna, a first-grade teacher, entered the program with four years of experience teaching first and second grade. She asked to join the program after attending a presentation given for interested parents and teachers by teachers in her school who were already in the program. She found that she agreed with the assumption that children have assets rather than deficits, and that she already practiced many of the behaviors recommended for enhancing children's self-concepts. She liked the freedom and flexibility of the classroom arrangements shown in slides and film, and thought that the materials were not very different from those she already used.

The teacher becomes acquainted with the subject and compares her present approach with the Responsive approach.

She felt most competent in the teaching of language skills. Working with children either individually or in small groups, she used basal texts and workbooks to teach sequential phonetic skills. She supplemented these materials with trade books, paperbacks, and book-record combinations, and occasionally had individuals or groups dictate stories to her and draw or paint accompanying pictures.

Teachers have an opportunity to learn about expectations for their teaching.

### Staff Development

Before school opened in September, Donna and the other teachers new to the program attended a two-day orientation workshop. They learned about and

discussed the Responsive goals and principles and their application to the classroom environment, curriculum materials and activities, teacher roles, and community participation. Part of the second day was devoted to a self-evaluation session in which the teachers answered for themselves two questions:

Teachers are given a focus for comparing their teaching with Responsive teaching.

1. In what ways do I consider myself to be already "responsive"?

2. Where would I like to make a change?

The teacher identifies the similarities between her approach and the Responsive approach.

In an individual meeting with the staff developer, Donna shared her answers to the two questions. She considered her approach "responsive" in that 1) she listened carefully to children; 2) she respected them by treating them equally; 3) she accepted their home language; and 4) she provided opportunities for free exploration with mathematics-related and art materials. She stated that she wanted to change her room arrangement to a more flexible arrangement that could accommodate changes in the schedule and activities initiated spontaneously by the children.

The teacher selects a topic for learning.

In a subsequent follow-up meeting, Donna and the staff developer looked at her classroom and talked about ways it could be arranged to accomplish what she wanted. They both knew that the real test of an arrangement would occur when the children themselves were in the classroom. They made three different floor plans on graph paper. Donna chose one, and decided to try it for a week or two before consulting the staff developer again.

The teacher assumes responsibility for a follow-up plan.

She learns from application to the classroom.

The new room arrangement provided space for small-group work and individual work, a library area, and areas that could be used for several purposes. As she used the new arrangement, Donna realized that it would enable her to spend more time attending to individual children while the more independent children worked on their own, instead of teaching children primarily in large groups and assigning tasks in the basal text workbooks.

The teacher uses other teachers as resources.

This change required a different daily schedule, a different method of keeping records, and a different use of materials. To get ideas for an appropriate daily schedule, Donna observed several other teachers' classrooms. With the staff developer's help, she began changing her morning schedule from one that specified times for particular curriculum areas to one that provided individual assignments and choices of activities related to learning centers. As she became accustomed

to the new schedule, she gradually expanded it to the full day. She began to keep records by observing children and writing anecdotal notes, and having children maintain and discuss with her some of their own records instead of relying on files from their workbooks, periodic tests, and mental notes.

The teacher paces her own changes.

In her language program, Donna began using the trade books, paperbacks, comic books, and book-record combinations as the primary material. Children stocked the library area with books from the school library and magazines and books from home. She selected books that represented the cultures of the children in the classroom and provided information about other ethnic and cultural groups. The children enjoyed tape recording and listening to their own stories and listening to story records while reading accompanying books.

During the time in which these changes occurred, Donna felt free to call upon the staff developer when she needed help and when she wanted confirmation of her progress. She also discussed ideas with other teachers in the building, and read articles about similar approaches to teaching. She felt frustrated at times because the children had difficulty making decisions and staying within limits, but she learned to redirect them and maintain limits that were appropriate for the schedule and arrangement of the classroom.

The teacher views the staff developer as a resource, and uses other resources as well.

As she looked back over her experience, she attributed her success to having already had an attitude of respect for the children and to using her knowledge of their interests to provide meaningful materials. She also gave the staff developer credit for being there when she needed her to help with problems, suggest ideas, or make observations on her progress.

The teacher evaluates and takes credit for her accomplishments

...and gives credit where it is due.

*Teachers learn from each other in workshops, in the teachers' lounge, and in meetings they arrange.*

## III. Example of a Staff Developer's Experience

In this section, we present examples of three teachers' experiences in staff development, from the point of view of a staff developer.

### Background

Marion, who had been a staff developer for two years, was to work with ten teachers and ten teacher assistants. Three teachers and two assistants were new to the program; the others had been in the program for some time. She viewed herself as being responsible for providing appropriate inservice training for the teachers and teacher assistants. It could take the form of periodic group workshops, demonstrations, individual consultations, observation and feedback in the classroom, or arrangements for visits to other classrooms and outside workshops and seminars.

The staff developer understands her responsibilities.

### Orientation Workshop

Before school started, Marion held a three-day workshop. Its purpose was to give the teachers* a chance to get to know each other, to orient the new teachers, and to enable the returning teachers to obtain new information and begin to plan for the year.

She sets objectives for the orientation workshop.

On the first morning, Marion described the goals of the program--promoting the development of problem-solving abilities, of healthy self-concept, and of culturally pluralistic attitudes and behaviors--and explained that teachers and assistants were expected to teach in a way that helped children to develop towards these goals. She stated that the Responsive Classroom Observation Schedule** was a resource that teachers could use in evaluating and guiding their teaching. She explained that her role was to help each teacher to identify ways in which his or her teaching was already Responsive, and to help them learn additional ways of teaching Responsively.

The requirements of the program are made clear.

The staff developer defines her role.

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*In this section, as in the preceding sections, "teachers" refers both to teachers and to teacher assistants.

**For a description of the Responsive Classroom Observation Schedule, see Chapter 11, "Evaluation in the Responsive Education Program."

The teachers then had a choice of writing about Responsive teaching or observing and taking notes about what others wrote and said. The writing assignment for the returning teachers was to answer the question, "What is Responsive teaching to you?" The new teachers had a choice of describing Responsive teaching or writing down two questions about it. When they had finished writing, the returning and new teachers formed small groups and discussed their observations and questions. Meeting again in a large group, they shared some of their responses. The new teachers had an opportunity to ask questions of the entire group.

The staff developer gives clear directions, choices, and a focus.

The teachers are encouraged to share knowledge and experience.

In the afternoon session, the teachers had an opportunity to obtain more information about the program by looking through and discussing written materials, a film, and videotapes of classrooms. Marion circulated to answer questions and participate in small-group discussions. She paid particular attention to questions from the new staff members.

At the end of the day, the new teachers were asked to answer three questions for themselves:

1. What are two things that you learned about Responsive teaching?
2. Which aspects of Responsive teaching are similar to your own teaching?
3. Which aspects are still unclear to you?

They shared their responses with the group.

The staff developer provides a focus for self-evaluation and integration of learning.

The teachers then decided how they wanted to use the remaining two days of preparation. Some chose to concentrate on language development, others chose to work on setting up their classrooms, and the new teachers wanted more information about discipline in the classroom, room arrangement, and the relationship between the teacher and the teacher assistant. Marion provided sessions on these topics on the remaining days. At the end of the workshop, she asked the teachers to evaluate their experience by writing about what they would feel comfortable doing at the beginning of the year in their classrooms and what they would concentrate on to get started.

Teachers plan their own learning.

## Planning Appropriate Inservice Training

Marion knew that she would be conducting bi-weekly group workshops, working individually with

The staff developer knows the structure of an inservice training program.

some teachers, arranging classroom visits, providing program and curriculum materials as needed, and keeping the teachers informed about relevant local workshops and seminars. She didn't yet know what topics would be appropriate for the group meetings and which teachers would participate, or how frequently she would be working with individual teachers.

She recognizes what information she needs to plan appropriate training.

In order to plan appropriate inservice training, Marion wanted to get an idea of the areas in which each teacher was competent and the areas in which each teacher needed further development. She began by having an individual meeting with each teacher and assistant. She also planned to use the Responsive Classroom Observation Schedule with each teacher.

She formulates an outline with which to assess implementation of the program.

The purpose of Marion's first interview with each teacher was to learn about their own views of their teaching and their needs for assistance. To guide the discussion and her observations, she formulated a list of areas of Responsive teaching. She would attempt to find out about each teacher's knowledge and confidence in each area, although she would not necessarily ask specific questions about each area. The areas were:

- Gaining knowledge of the children.
- Providing materials that are familiar, representative of the children's backgrounds, and at different levels of development.
- Arranging the classroom appropriately.
- Scheduling activities that enhance development of skills in language, mathematics, science, and social awareness.
- Providing choices.
- Using flexible grouping.
- Establishing clear and consistent limits.
- Asking open-ended questions, giving clear directions, and encouraging children to assume responsibility and take credit for their learning.
- Recognizing differences and similarities in children's backgrounds, interests, knowledge of curriculum areas, and skills.
- Working as a team with the teacher assistant (or teacher).

Individual Meetings with Teachers

Marion's first meeting was with Carole Burgess, a young, soft-spoken woman who had taught in an open classroom for one year. She had chosen to join the program because she found it in agreement with her belief in "accepting children as they are."

Marion found that Carole's curriculum materials were varied and included many that she had developed herself. She knew how to set up learning centers and had already outlined lesson plans for the first few days. When Marion asked about her concerns, Carole answered that she wanted to find out how Responsive her teaching was, but that she preferred not to be observed for two weeks, so that she could get used to her children. Marion agreed to come back in two weeks to observe and to discuss her teaching further.

The teacher's concerns provide a starting point for individualized training.

Marion's tentative observations were that Carole was highly organized, knowledgeable about curriculum, and accustomed to using a variety of materials to provide choices. She also noted that Carole might provide too many choices or be unrealistic about full acceptance of children "as they really are."

The staff developer respects the teacher's evaluation of herself and her pace of learning.

Her second meeting was with Ethel Ross, a third-grade teacher who had been in the program one year and was respected by the school principal because her children usually scored high on the standardized reading and mathematics tests. Ethel used basal texts and workbooks and concentrated on practice and drill. From her previous knowledge of Ethel's teaching, Marion was concerned about helping her provide more choices, materials that were more relevant to the children's backgrounds, and more opportunities for children to use their ideas and values.

She notes the teacher's strengths and weaknesses.

In their meeting, Ethel expressed no need for assistance and saw no inconsistency between her teaching and Responsive teaching. Marion asked her what her objectives were for the year. Ethel stated that in addition to working on skill development, she wanted to make sure the children felt good about themselves. Marion asked her if she would review the Responsive Classroom Observation Schedule and choose for discussion at their next meeting a section that she found relevant to self-concept development. Ethel agreed and they established a time for another meeting.

The staff developer offers a resource for self-evaluation.

Marion's tentative observations about Ethel's teaching were that she was very knowledgeable about

traditional curriculum and development of academic skills, maintained limits effectively, and recognized individual differences among children in academic skills. She also noted that Ethel was intellectually aware of the Responsive goals and principles, but seemed to misinterpret them to support her present way of teaching, and might resist assistance, relying on the high test scores of her children to assert that she was a successful teacher. The best approach, Marion noted, might be through Ethel's interest in self-concept development. Her use of the observation schedule, coupled with Marion's own observations, might help her realize that she could encourage children to use their own ideas and become more responsible for their learning, and provide more materials that represented the children's background.

The staff developer notes the teacher's strengths and weaknesses.

The staff developer respects the teacher's objectives and uses an approach that may help the teacher become aware of areas for development.

Marion's third meeting was with Ron Carter, who recently received his teaching credential and asked to join the program because he believed in "open-type education." The discussion revealed that he had completed his intern teaching in a traditionally-taught classroom and wanted to break away from that approach. He wanted to provide trips to the community, many opportunities for discussion, and varied activities and materials. He stated that children liked him and that he was fairly good at organizing a class.

The teacher evaluates his teaching.

He expressed some concern about lacking knowledge of second-grade curriculum. He had been reading the district-recommended texts and was not sure how to complement them with other methods of teaching the same skills. Marion suggested that he concentrate on either language or mathematics in the following week, reading the curriculum and attempting to identify the curriculum objectives, in order to have a basis for choosing other materials and making a lesson plan. Ron chose the area of language and they set a time for another meeting.

In an appropriate situation, the staff developer assumes a more directive role and offers a choice within clear limits.

Marion's preliminary observations of Ron were that he was enthusiastic and open to using a variety of materials, and wanted to interact with children. He seemed weak in knowledge of curriculum and unclear about teaching objectives. His ability to organize would be seen when he began to write lesson plans and conduct his class.

She notes the teacher's strengths and weaknesses.

As a result of these meetings and similar meetings with other teachers, Marion tentatively identified some topics for the group workshops, and noted which teachers would benefit from individual consultation. She also tentatively noted which classrooms other teachers

might observe as good examples of particular aspects of Responsive teaching, if the teachers were willing. A week after school started, she began to visit classrooms to check her tentative assessments of the teachers' strengths and weaknesses and to ask the teachers what topics they recommended for the group sessions.

The staff developer identifies potential resources within the staff.

She respects the teachers' own view of their needs.

Continued Assessment of Teachers and Final Planning

Marion's subsequent visit to Carole Burgess's classroom revealed that Carole was very competent in organizing the classroom effectively, asking open-ended questions, using a variety of materials, and working as a team with the teacher assistant. Carole and the assistant were both working with some children in small groups while other children were working independently on self-directed activities. Other children, however, were heckling each other and interrupting Carole and the assistant. Marion could see that Carole needed to provide fewer choices and clearer statements of limits.

She checks her previous assessment of the teacher's strengths and weaknesses.

In a discussion afterwards, Marion praised Carole's skills and expressed concern about the apparent discipline problem. Carole said that she did not think there was a discipline problem. Because of the strengths in Carole's teaching, Marion respected Carole's resistance to her observation. She waited until Carole herself, three weeks later, asked for assistance with three of the children who were apparently taking advantage of the situation. Carole asked to be videotaped, made her observations, and with Marion's help began working on being more consistent in reinforcing rules and limits. Marion asked Carole if she would be a resource to some of the teachers in regard to using a variety of materials and implementing curriculum objectives in lesson plans. Carole agreed, and Marion subsequently arranged for Ron Carter to observe her classroom and to work with Carole to increase his knowledge of curriculum and planning.

She respects the teacher's decision about her pacing.

She gives the teacher credit and develops a resource for another teacher.

Ethel Ross chose to examine a section of the Responsive Classroom Observation Schedule on the representation of children in the classroom. As she reviewed her own materials, she found that most of them did not reflect the cultural background and community experience of the children in her classroom. She decided that she wanted to expand her language curriculum and use children's personal experience in language development. Since she liked to learn by reading, Marion offered her some articles about

The teacher determines her own focus for learning with the help of guidelines offered by the staff developer.

The staff developer offers material to suit the teacher's preferred learning style.

teaching language in an integrated way. Ethel also expressed interest in observing other teachers who were using some of these methods. Marion suggested several teachers and Ethel chose the ones she wanted to visit and discuss ideas with. Subsequently, Ethel developed a library area in her classroom that contained books selected by the children as well as by her. She began having children write their own stories, using personal experiences and trips to the community as themes.

The teacher evaluates and integrates what has been learned when she is ready to do so.

Several months later, Ethel was willing to assess the changes she had made and to evaluate the ways they contributed to children's self-concept. She continued to use the basal texts as primary materials. Marion recognized that Ethel had gained a clearer understanding of self-concept development and of Responsive principles in application to language curriculum. She realized that the teacher still needed to expand this understanding to other curriculum areas and that the process might take an equally long period of time.

The staff developer assesses the amount of change, and recognizes what is still needed.

The inservice training uses local resources.

Ron Carter, at Marion's suggestion, took a course at the local university on curriculum in open education. The course and his work with Carole Burgess and Marion helped him become more effective in planning lessons and analyzing the progress of the children in terms of the objectives of the program and district. Although Marion had initially had misgivings about being directive with Ron, she realized that no matter how enthusiastic and well liked a teacher may be, the teacher is not being fully Responsive if the children are not developing the academic skills they need. It took Ron several months to develop a workable curriculum. Marion was willing to wait in this case because she knew that Ron had other Responsive skills and was interested in improving.

The group inservice program was divided into two groups, one on Responsive teaching in language development, the other on selecting appropriate materials for children of different cultures. Both began with structured presentations by Marion and evolved into sessions in which teachers shared examples of their own teaching. Marion reinforced group training with individual follow-up meetings with teachers who requested and needed them.

She also held individual consultations with other teachers who requested them, and provided information on weekend seminars at the local university on relevant topics. Her activities during visits to classrooms included demonstrating open-ended

*Teachers learn to be Responsive by working with children.*

questioning with children, role playing, the use of new materials, observing teachers and providing feedback, and often just listening to the teachers' comments and concerns. Marion herself used local professional educators as consultants for group sessions and for private consultations on areas that were not her strengths, such as knowledge of the cultural backgrounds of some of the children and using the discovery approach in mathematics.

The staff developer uses a variety of training methods, and draws on outside resources as well.

Responsive Elements in Training

Marion used the Responsive principles in her approach to training in that:

1. She respected and used the strengths that the teachers brought from their previous experience.

2. She supported the teachers' assuming responsibility for and control of their own learning, within clear expectations and limits.

3. She used the teachers' interests and real circumstances in the classroom as the context for their developing Responsive skills in an integrated fashion.

4. She encouraged and guided the teachers to share and interact.

The staff developer uses the Responsive principles in training, helps teachers work towards objectives, offers a variety of methods of learning, and provides for her own professional growth.

She recognized that teachers had to meet both district and program objectives, and guided them to identify the objectives they were working toward, whether in regard to a discipline problem or a lesson plan for language development.

She made her own evaluations of each teacher in order to plan appropriate inservice training and allowed teachers to determine their own needs and plan their own learning from the choices that she provided. She provided a variety of methods of developing the skills of Responsive teaching, and made the resources of the community available as well.

Marion also provided for her own professional growth by learning from the teachers and consulting local professional educators.

The same principles that apply to children's learning apply to adult learning. Responsive staff development is the implementation of a sequence of steps that includes: teachers raising their own questions; working with staff developers to set goals; taking a focus for learning; experiencing, analyzing, and integrating learning; and applying what is learned to the classroom and evaluating efforts and planning next steps.

The kinds of experiences that are provided vary--they may include group workshops, individual observation and feedback, and consultations regarding particular children and teaching strategies. Being responsive to the variety of teachers' sophistications and needs requires providing many means of learning.

# 11 EVALUATION IN THE RESPONSIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM

## Introduction

Evaluation in the Responsive Education Program is designed to support and document the program in achieving its three goals--supporting cognitive growth by promoting the development of problem-solving abilities, supporting affective growth by fostering the development of healthy self-concept, and supporting social growth by promoting the development of culturally pluralistic attitudes and behaviors. It seeks to be fair and responsive to the individuals and groups participating in the program. It reflects a commitment to all those who hold a stake in education:

Evaluation in the program seeks to support and document the program in achieving its three goals.

- to children (i.e., areas of developmental need should be clearly identified and areas of strength documented);
- to educational staff and parents (i.e., those affected by an evaluation program should have decision-making power at the design stage);
- to programs and institutions (i.e., the questions addressed should be relevant to the goals set by those evaluated).

It reflects a commitment to those who hold a stake in education.

In this chapter, we describe our approach to evaluation and some findings about the effects of the program. Part I discusses our concept of Responsive evaluation. Part II discusses some of the instruments and techniques developed and used by the program. Part III surveys some findings of our own and others' evaluation studies.

## I. A Responsive Approach to Evaluation

In any educational evaluation system, a concern for fairness requires that certain broad principles be observed:

1. Educational evaluation should provide information that will increase learning opportunities for children.

Fairness requires that evaluation:
- provide useful information
- specify criteria and use appropriate methodology
- be accurate.

2. Educational evaluation should clearly specify the educational goals and priorities from which it operates and use appropriate methodology.

3. Educational evaluation should be based on assessments that are accurate and representative.

In the Responsive Education Program, these principles are expanded by a special commitment to be responsive to the particular needs and circumstances of the program and of those who participate in it.

Responsiveness further requires that evaluation:
- provide meaningful information to those who participate
- consider the particular goals and priorities of the program
- use a wide range of techniques.

1. Responsive evaluation should provide information in a form that is meaningful to the particular community, school, and classroom, and should give feedback to people at all levels of the educational system, especially to those who are assessed or participate in the assessment process.

2. Responsive evaluation should relate program effects to the particular goals and priorities of the program. For example, the Responsive Education Program seeks to provide children with a certain kind of classroom experience. Consequently, evaluation in the program considers the elements that make up children's classroom experience (e.g., the ways children interact with adults, with other children, and with materials in the physical environment).

3. Responsive evaluation should use a range of educational assessment techniques in a manner that is sensitive to the particular individuals and cultural groups participating. If existing instruments are inadequate, new ones should be developed. Standardized tests should be viewed as offering only one limited way for children to demonstrate what they have learned; some children demonstrate knowledge and skills best through written or oral reports, others by carrying out projects in which they use the knowledge and skills being assessed.

These notions of fairness and responsiveness call for significant departures from traditional practices of educational evaluation in some areas. Below, we look at two such areas: assessment of differences

in the context of cultural pluralism, and assessment of the form of educational experience.

## Assessing Differences in the Context of Cultural Pluralism

In the choice of curriculum, in the selection and training of teachers and in the assessment of children, schools tend to reflect certain cultural values. When these values are at variance with the values of children's families or with children's personal values, they are likely to result in unfair educational practices. Examples of such educational practices are:

When schools' cultural values are at variance with those of children, they tend to result in unfair educational practices.

1) Stereotyping in teaching and in school-program and career counseling. For example, boys may be encouraged to be aggressive; to study mathematics, science, and shop; and to pursue scientific careers, while girls may be encouraged to be passive, to study language arts and home economics, and to pursue service-oriented careers. Students from low-income groups may be steered toward low-status occupations.

2) Unfair ability grouping ("tracking") that places children of higher socio-economic status or of dominant ethnic groups in more favorable positions to get good educations and good jobs.

Both these practices usually involve some form of educational assessment. To the extent that assessment practices are themselves biased, they contribute to and increase the biases of the school system.

Traditional assessment practices have generally been biased in favor of children who share the values and backgrounds of those who design, administer, and interpret them--that is, in favor of white and/or middle-class children. Prime factors that have been found to bias test results against children of color and of low-income groups are 1) rapport with the interviewer, 2) materials used in the test, and 3) attitudes toward the test.[1] For example, William Labov, a sociolinguist, describes how a group of young Black students "improved" dramatically on verbal facility when their white interviewer was replaced with a Black one, and the setting was made more relaxed.[2]

The design, administration, and interpretation of assessment have often been biased against children of color and of low-income groups.

It is important to note that assessment in itself does not necessarily imply a statement about relative worth. Assessment in itself points out

differences--for example, difference among individuals or differences between two points in time. In educational assessment, individual children or entire classes may be compared on particular skills such as adding, or on characteristics such as attitude toward school; teachers may be compared on teaching ability; and entire schools or educational programs may be compared on the percentage of children performing at grade level, or on the rate of absences per month. The fact that two children, teachers, or programs differ in a given respect does not in itself make a statement about their relative worth. Such judgments --if any are made--come from the interpretation of assessment information or from values embedded in the assessment instruments and procedures.

Assessment in itself points out differences. It need not judge relative worth.

In support of the Responsive Education Program's goal of promoting cultural pluralism (i.e., promoting equity and pluralistic perspectives), we have sought to develop evaluation strategies and instruments that do not sort or allocate inequitably, and to provide assessment techniques that enable school staff members to identify behaviors and circumstances that tend to be unfair to particular individuals or groups. We have also sought to gear evaluation to the interests and needs of the particular community, school, and children concerned, and to report on educational outcomes in the area of cultural pluralism.

The program supports evaluation practices that promote equity and pluralistic perspectives.

Form of Educational Experience

Children's educational experience can be divided into content and form. Content refers to the curriculum of the classroom (e.g., language, mathematics, social studies). Form relates to children's experience of what goes on in the classroom: the teacher's manner, the social climate in the room, the relationship between the curriculum and their skills and interests, the attitudes fostered toward learning and toward school.

The form of educational experience influences children's cognitive, affective, and social growth.

The form as well as the content of educational experience affects children's cognitive development, their concepts of themselves as learners and as individuals, and their ways of interacting with others. For example, the form of experience may lead children to discover that they have valuable talents they can develop for profit and enjoyment, that reading is useful and rewarding, and that other children are important resources. Or, it may lead them to conclude that they are not capable learners or that reading is something one puts up with for a while to get permission to go on to something better.

Educational evaluation has traditionally relied on standardized achievement tests for assessing individual competencies and the success of educational programs. Such tests do not adequately assess the form of children's educational experience, however. The Responsive Education Program views traditional measures of cognitive growth as only one component of a comprehensive assessment system. We consider variables that affect the form of educational experience, such as classroom process and school environment, to be important areas of assessment.

The program evaluates such variables as classroom process and school environment.

## II. How Does Responsive Evaluation Work?

Our approach to evaluation--supporting and documenting the program in the achievement of its three goals and seeking to be fair and responsive to those who participate--requires a comprehensive, innovative system of evaluation. To meet this requirement, we have developed and are continuing to develop a number of new instruments and techniques. We also sometimes use traditional instruments and techniques, when they are appropriate to the needs of participants and capable of being used in a fair and responsive way.

In the Responsive Education Program:
- evaluation methodology is consistent with the program's goals and principles
- uses a variety of instruments and techniques
- evaluation is viewed as formative.

Some particular features of operation are as follows:

1) Methodology is consistent with the program's goals and principles. Evaluation staff members are not only trained in objective measurement but are also involved in the program conceptually and operationally.

2) We use a variety of instruments and techniques to cover a broad spectrum of the educational process. For example, questionnaires may be directed to children, to their parents, to teachers, or to school administrators. Special techniques have been devised that do not disrupt the process observed (e.g., minutes of public meetings are analyzed to assess a group's influence on the educational process; children's communication skills are assessed through observation of the children during their regular routine).

3) We view each evaluation project as formative --yielding useful data that contributes to the ongoing development and improvement of a program. Moreover, the evaluation process itself is viewed as developmental and progressive: a stage of evaluation yields formative data on other evaluation processes.

Evaluation projects cover the following areas:

1. Child development and achievement.

2. Teaching process.

3. Parent involvement.

4. The system in which the program is implemented.

We now briefly discuss our work in each of these areas.

1. Responsive Evaluation Looks at Child Development and Achievement

Cognitive Development. We have developed a variety of instruments to monitor children's development in the personal and social domains, in oral and written language, and in problem-solving.

In assessing cognitive development, the program emphasizes reflecting a wide range of individual experience and achievement.

For purposes of classroom instruction, we have sought to shift the emphasis from normative testing to a criterion-reference approach, from an emphasis on assessing level of achievement in a narrow band of cognitive skills to reflecting a wide range of individual experience and accomplishment. One child may be mechanically inclined and be able to take things apart and repair them; another may prefer to write or create stories; a third may like to solve complex mathematical problems using her electronic calculator. Simply to compare these three children on reading-test scores would be not only one-sided but also inappropriate in terms of the children's own values, and very likely in terms of the school's objectives as well.

From time to time we have used results of standardized tests to demonstrate children's achievement. For the most part, the impetus for such testing has come from outside the program. We do recognize, however, that such tests can be useful for assessing specific areas of cognitive achievement, provided that adequate safeguards are applied to the way they are administered and interpreted.

Language Production. An important part of a child's language development is his ability to express thoughts and ideas using his own style of speaking and writing. The Responsive Education Program emphasizes communication of meaning, use of personal ideas, and creativity in language

production. The Write-About-A-Picture Task (WAAPT) is designed to capture the extent and richness of children's written expression. Either individually or in small groups, children are shown one of several pictures and asked to write a story about it. A detailed scoring guide enables teachers or evaluators to assess the children's work in both quantitative and qualitative terms (e.g., length of communication units, spelling, organization, plot extension, and creative flavor).

The program assesses the extent and richness of children's written expression.

Self-Concept. The program has used a variety of instruments to assess children's attitudes toward themselves and toward learning, including some of its own devising. The Responsive Self-Concept Test is a comprehensive inventory designed for use by teachers. The first section is a nine-part rating scale; in the second section the child is presented with a series of statements related to healthy self-concept, and he is asked to attribute these statements to a picture of himself or to a picture of another child he does not know. In the Responsive Self-Concept Target Game, children toss a bean bag at targets of varying difficulty. Their expectations of success are related to prior performance to give an index of orientation to self and to reality.

It uses a variety of instruments to assess children's attitudes and expectations about themselves.

2. Responsive Evaluation Looks at Teaching

We have developed a number of techniques for evaluating classroom process. The most comprehensive of these is the Responsive Classroom Observation Schedule, which is designed to provide teachers with information about the degree to which the environment, materials, and activities in their classrooms are Responsive. It can be used for teachers' self-assessment, for instructional evaluation, or as part of an inservice staff development program. The schedule covers nine areas, such as the physical environment of the classroom, the nature of materials used, teaching/learning process in mathematics and language, and classroom management practices. When used by a trained observer, it takes a full day to complete.

The Responsive Classroom Observation Schedule provides information about the degree to which the environment, materials, and activities in a classroom are Responsive.

Use of the schedule emphasizes teachers' professional development. When the observer is a staff developer, he or she meets with the teacher before the observation and they jointly decide what is to be observed and how the results are to be interpreted. A Feedback Manual that accompanies the schedule provides guidelines for establishing a cooperative relationship between teacher and observer.

Use of the Schedule emphasizes teachers' professional development.

### 3. Responsive Evaluation Looks at Parent Participation

Parent participation in the educational process is an important goal of the Responsive Education Program. The Parent/Content Questionnaire is an interview schedule designed to collect information on the extent and type of parent participation, particularly at the decision-making level. Another technique devised to address this same question has been content analysis of the minutes of the Parent Advisory Council. The kinds of decisions parents made were categorized as operational and supportive (e.g., organizing a cake sale to raise money for classroom materials) or as policy-making and politically-oriented, (e.g., preparing a position paper to be read at a Board of Education meeting).

The program assesses parent participation, both in supportive activities and in policy making.

### 4. Responsive Evaluation Looks at the System

Educational Force Analysis. Teachers' ability to develop professionally and to provide positive educational opportunities for children is influenced by such forces as the school principal, other teachers in the school, parents, staff developers, teacher assistants, physical facilities, the curriculum, and state mandates. To assess the effect of these forces, we have developed the Educational Forces Inventory. This instrument represents teachers' ratings of the influence of such forces on a two-dimensional grid. One dimension shows how strong or weak the influence of a force is and the other shows whether it is positive or negative.

The program assesses the forces that influence teachers.

When this instrument has shown forces operating to inhibit the teachers' effectiveness, the program has sought ways to change them. For example, in one district the force field pattern indicated that some principals were clearly more supportive and influential than others. These findings were used to set up workshops to train principals in techniques of supporting teachers or making support available.

The information can be used in monitoring the system and setting development priorities.

Within a school district, the influence of forces on teachers can be viewed in relation to school and district norms. This information can be used by district administration staff in monitoring the educational system and setting program development priorities.

Program Implementation Analysis. As the Responsive Education Program is implemented in a community, program staff use various check lists and rating forms

to identify and to assess factors that affect program operation, such as administrative support for the program, adequacy of physical facilities and materials, commitment of resources and personnel for staff development, acceptance of program goals, and parent participation. This information is used to streamline the implementation process and to insure strong program operation.

Analysis of the factors that affect program operation can contribute to successful implementation.

Community Case Studies. In partnership with local school districts, we have conducted case studies to assess the impact of the Responsive Education Program on a particular community. A comprehensive picture is assembled from a variety of evaluation data gathered by the district, program staff, and independent evaluators.

Community case studies provide a comprehensive picture of program effects.

Research and Development. In addition to assessing the effects of the program, we are working to document the unique features of our program and to develop new ways of collecting and using data. We report our findings and our development of new instruments and techniques to educators, researchers, parents, and others who are interested through in-house publications, articles in professional journals, and presentations to groups.

We report our research and development.

## III. Effects of the Responsive Education Program: What Do the Data Show?

The effects of the Responsive Education Program have been extensively documented over a number of years. Here we present a survey of major findings from three sources: 1) studies commissioned by the federal government and conducted by independent investigators; 2) evaluations carried out by the program itself; and 3) findings compiled by staff of individual school districts participating in the program.

Evaluation studies have been conducted by:
- independent investigators
- the program itself
- individual school districts.

Each contributes a unique perspective. The outside investigators were concerned with comparing the program with other programs participating in Project Follow Through and with comparison classrooms. They marshaled considerable resources and represented an objective point of view. Their questions were not always cast in terms of program goals, however, and they tended to focus on a narrow set of educational outcomes. Our own evaluations have encompassed system effects as well as child outcomes. Where appropriate methodology has not been available, we have devised our own techniques and instruments to fill the gaps. Evaluations by individual districts have addressed local concerns, but these studies have often been of

general interest in documenting the effects of our program.

The composite picture presented by evaluation studies has been favorable to the program.

The composite picture presented by the findings of independent investigators, of our own studies, and of local school district staff is highly favorable to the Responsive Education Program. Some highlights of these findings are as follows:

- Cognitive development and academic gains of children in the Responsive Education Program have kept pace with or exceeded those of children in other programs and in classrooms of the same age group. Moreover, there is a positive relationship between the degree to which the program is implemented in the classroom and the amount of children's cognitive achievement.

- Children's attitudes toward themselves and toward learning are more positive in Responsive classrooms.

- The teaching/learning environment in Responsive classrooms consistently provides children with more meaningful choices, and enables them to take more initiative in and responsibility for their own learning.

- Parent participation is greater in Responsive classrooms than in contemporary classrooms or in other educational programs. Parents participate at all levels of the educational process--in classroom instruction, in program implementation, and in educational decision-making.

- System effects of the Responsive Education Program include high teacher morale and positive working relationships between teachers and teacher assistants. There is evidence of program spin-off to other classrooms and to entire districts.

Below, we present examples of the findings in each of these areas.

## Children's Cognitive Development and Academic Gains

A major goal of the Responsive Education Program is to support children's cognitive growth in a way that promotes the development of problem-solving abilities and the acquisition of useful academic skills. Because the Responsive Education Program

does not subscribe to the deficit model of education, it does not seek to provide "compensatory" education, but simply to be more responsive to children of all cultural and economic groups.

We conducted a study to determine whether children of low-income and ethnic-minority groups increased in cognitive abilities related to problem solving while in the program. Several hundred children were randomly selected from the 14 school districts across the nation participating in the program. They all came from low-income homes and a large percentage from non-Anglo ethnic groups. We chose as our criterion measure the four subscales of the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children that were most relevant to problem solving.

*Across Districts*

*The trend of intelligence test scores for children in the Responsive Education Program was upward. At the time they entered the program, the average scores for these children had been significantly lower than for children of the same ages in the national norming sample; but scores at later test dates were equal to or higher than national norms. When their classrooms became more Responsive, children from Anglo and non-Anglo families with limited economic means gained in cognitive abilities at a higher rate than the national norming sample.*[4]

Cognitive development and academic gains of children in the program have kept pace with or exceeded those of comparison children.

Several studies carried out within individual school districts show that children participating in the Responsive Education Program are developing a firm academic foundation.

*Cleveland, Ohio*

*"At grade 4, level of performance on CTBS reading skills changed dramatically in favor of Follow-Through school, as compared to that of the Control School.... In Comprehension skills, the steep rise reflecting continuous progress was noted for years 1 to 3 for Follow-Through, which was not at all evident for the two controls and for the Title I school population. The dramatic improvement in performance of Follow-Through school on basic reading skills contrasted with the gradual improvement in performance of the Controls. A*

*marked improvement was also noted for Title I school population on Vocabulary skills, but its plateau reached at year 2 was lower than that of Follow-Through school."*[5]

## Classroom Learning in Relation to Program Implementation

The amount of children's learning depends on the degree to which the program has been accepted and applied in the classroom. An independent investigator, Stanford Research Institute (SRI), looked at child achievement in grades one and three in relation to how well the program was implemented, as determined by SRI.

### *Across Districts*

Studies show a positive relationship between degree of implementation of the program and academic gains.

*In both grades surveyed, there was significant relationship between how closely a particular district was following the Responsive Education Program and the level of academic achievement of the children in the classrooms. There were correlations ranging from .35 to .51 between the degree of program implementation and children's scores on the reading and mathematics subtests of the Metropolitan Achievement Test.*[6]

Data from individual school districts also demonstrate that the degree of Responsiveness in a classroom is related to children's academic achievement. A useful tool for studying this issue has been the Responsive Classroom Observation Schedule which was developed to give an accurate picture of how well a particular classroom is implementing the program.

### *Salt Lake City, Utah*

*In Salt Lake City, a dissertation study done at the University of Utah reported that, over a period of three years, scores on the Responsive Classroom Observation Schedule were correlated significantly with higher achievement of children in both reading and mathematics.*[7]

## Children's Self-Concept and Attitude Toward Learning

Another major goal of the Responsive Education Program is to support children in the development of healthy self-concepts (i.e., realistic self-images and appropriate self-esteem) in their views of them-

selves as individuals and as learners. One way to assess these areas is through standardized inventories, such as the "Who Am I" survey and the "What I Think About School."

*Reno, Nevada*

*"The results of the tests 'What I Think About School' and 'Who Am I' would tend to indicate that Follow Through Responsive Education Program children have a more positive feeling toward school and have a better self-image than Non-Follow Through children. These results and other more subjective reports (from teachers, teacher aides, and parents) would tend to give evidence that the program is successful in the affective domain."*[8]

Children's attitudes toward themselves and toward school are more positive in Responsive classrooms.

One indicator of children's attitudes toward school is the rate of absences. Attendance data from independent investigation and from within the program reflect positively on the effects of the Responsive Education Program.

*Across Districts*

*In a study by SRI, a comparison among seven Follow Through Programs and a group of comparison classrooms showed that the Responsive Education Program classes had the lowest rate of child absenteeism. Also, the rate of absenteeism tended to be lower in classes where adult Responsiveness was higher and where there was more child initiative.*[9]

The Teaching/Learning Environment

A Responsive teaching/learning environment provides children with more meaningful choices and enables them to take more initiative and responsibility.

A major focus for evaluation in the Responsive Education Program is the form of educational experience offered to the children (e.g., how children are treated by adults; how children treat each other; and the nature and quality of their academic and social experiences). A number of national studies by independent researchers reflect favorably on the program's effectiveness in this respect.

In the 1970-71 school year, SRI carried out detailed classroom observations as part of its national evaluation of Project Follow Through. In Duluth, Minnesota, three kindergarten and three first-grade classes implementing the Responsive Education Program within Follow Through were compared with three kindergarten and three first-grade classes not participating

in Follow Through. Observations covered all phases of classroom activity for two days. Comparisons were made on 28 process variables; on eight of these the Responsive Education classrooms were significantly different from comparison classrooms. Four of these variables were related to teacher strategy and the other four to child behavior.

*Duluth, Minnesota*

*On all four teacher-strategy variables that showed significant differences, the Responsive Education Program classrooms were operating in ways consistent with program objectives. "Adult teaching with concrete objects" was observed more frequently in Responsive classrooms, in line with the program emphasis on learning through direct experience. In Responsive classrooms, "Adult communication focus, small group" was more frequently observed, again in direct correspondence with program objectives for classroom process. In Responsive classrooms "Adult positive corrective feedback" was greater, and "Adult negative corrective feedback" less, in accordance with the Responsive philosophy of affirming children's self-expression.*

*The four variables that reflected significant differences in patterns of child behavior also indicated that the Responsive Education Program classrooms had achieved a distinctive pattern of interaction in line with program objectives. In Responsive Education classrooms, there were more occurrences of "child teaching another child" and of "child self-learning with symbols," both relating to the program principle of learning on one's own, which is closely allied to learning for its own sake. "Child asking questions," was higher in Responsive classrooms, reflecting child iniative and responsibility with respect to learning. There was also more of child "negative" behavior, probably a reflection of greater leeway provided for children's self-expression, and of more child-child interaction overall.*[10]

Program success in modifying the teaching/learning environment is also documented by surveys in which teachers were asked to address this question directly.

*Lebanon, New Hampshire*

*Teachers in the Responsive Education Program reported greater success than did teachers outside the program in developing cognitive skills and in promoting a positive self-image in children, and felt that parents of children in the program had undergone a positive change.*[11]

The Responsive Classroom Observation Schedule can be used to determine the degree of Responsiveness in a classroom in such areas as the teaching of language, classroom management, classroom organization in relation to self-directed learning, and representation of families, homes, and culture (in support of the program's goal of promoting culturally pluralistic attitudes and behaviors).

*Across Districts*

*In a study of eight school districts, classrooms participating in the Responsive Education Program were compared with classrooms of children of the same age group. The overall district scores within the Responsive Education Program group were each higher than the highest within the comparison group. The program also scored significantly higher on individual subscales, such as on Family, Home and Culture.*[12]

Parent Participation

To make schools more responsive to children, the Responsive Education Program has sought to support parent participation in the operation of schools and in educational decision-making. In 1973, a survey conducted by SRI compared parent attitudes in the Responsive Education Program with those in other Follow Through programs and in comparable non-Follow Through schools.

*Across Districts*

*Parents in the Responsive Education Program reported that they participated more in the teaching/learning process in educational decision-making; they indicated a more favorable attitude toward their school and their teachers, and felt that their children learned more.*[13]

Parent participation is greater in the Responsive Education Program.

The program has also encouraged parents to participate as teacher assistants and community aides.

Such participation has sometimes led to full-fledged careers in education, as parents have eventually acquired teaching credentials and continued on as regular teachers.[14]

A school district survey of parents in Lebanon, New Hampshire gives evidence of parents' satisfaction with the program and with their relationship to it.

*Lebanon, New Hampshire*

*Parents of children in Lebanon's Responsive Education classrooms felt that the program is working, and that it is helpful to them. Compared with parents whose children are not in the program, they reported that school has been more successful in helping them to learn about school and to understand and help their children.*[15]

Program Effects on the Educational System

The positive impact of the Responsive Education Program is reflected in its effects throughout the educational system. Our own surveys have consistently found that teachers and teacher assistants in the program express a strong feeling of respect and appreciation for each other's work in the classroom.[16] An abstract of findings from one district is fairly representative of what has been found throughout the districts.

*Owensboro, Kentucky*

System effects include high teacher morale and positive working relationship between teachers and teacher assistants.

*Teachers and teacher assistants in Responsive Education Program classrooms value each other's work highly. Both groups indicate that they have considerable influence on the educational process, and affect it in a positive way. Also, both teachers and teaching assistants have high regard for the support they receive from teacher training staff within the program.*[17]

Other aspects of teacher morale are also higher in Responsive classrooms.

*Across Districts*

*Teachers in Responsive Education Program classrooms had higher morale as measured by the Purdue Teacher Opinionaire than the teachers in the national sample used to standardize this test. In particular, Responsive teachers were higher on*

*Rapport with Principal, on Rapport Among Teachers, and on Satisfaction With Curriculum Issues.*[18]

The extent of program spin-off is one indicator of effectiveness at the level of the school and district. Frequently, teachers not in the program ask to be taught program principles and techniques and teachers transferred out of the program carry the techniques and principles with them.[19] A number of school districts have already implemented the Responsive Education Program throughout the first three or four grades; one is working on extending it upwards throughout its educational program, from kindergarten to twelfth grade; and several states are examining the possibility of implementing the program throughout all their public schools.[20]

There is evidence of program spin-off to other classrooms and to entire districts.

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# 12 IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

## Introduction

The purpose of this Implementation Guide is to provide a checklist of tasks that will assist community and school system decision makers in implementing the Responsive Education Program. The checklist evolved from an analysis of implementation evaluation reports and studies developed with school districts that have participated in the program. This analysis identified ten areas that decision makers should consider when implementing a new educational program, and a series of tasks within each area. Consideration of each area will contribute to the eventual effectiveness or success of the Responsive Education Program.

Analysis of previous experiences has identified ten areas of implementation to be considered.

Each area contains a series of tasks.

Figure 1 depicts the ten areas in a sequence of ten steps. The following text describes each area and presents a series of tasks related to each area. Some of the areas can be pursued simultaneously. Additional tasks may arise in individual school districts, or it may be necessary to initiate action in different areas. It may be necessary to carry out some tasks more than once. The most important point is that each area in the guide should be considered as thoroughly as possible.

## I. Information and Knowledge About the Program

Information about the program may come directly from interested persons in the school district or come from state departments of education, funding agencies, the program sponsor,* university faculties, or other practicing educators. The initial information may be obtained through conferences, educational fairs, multimedia presentations, education courses, brochures, or individual contacts. When an

Representative "stakeholders" should participate in information gathering or be informed about the program.

*The Responsive Education Program is available from the Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, 1855 Folsom Street, San Francisco, California 94103.

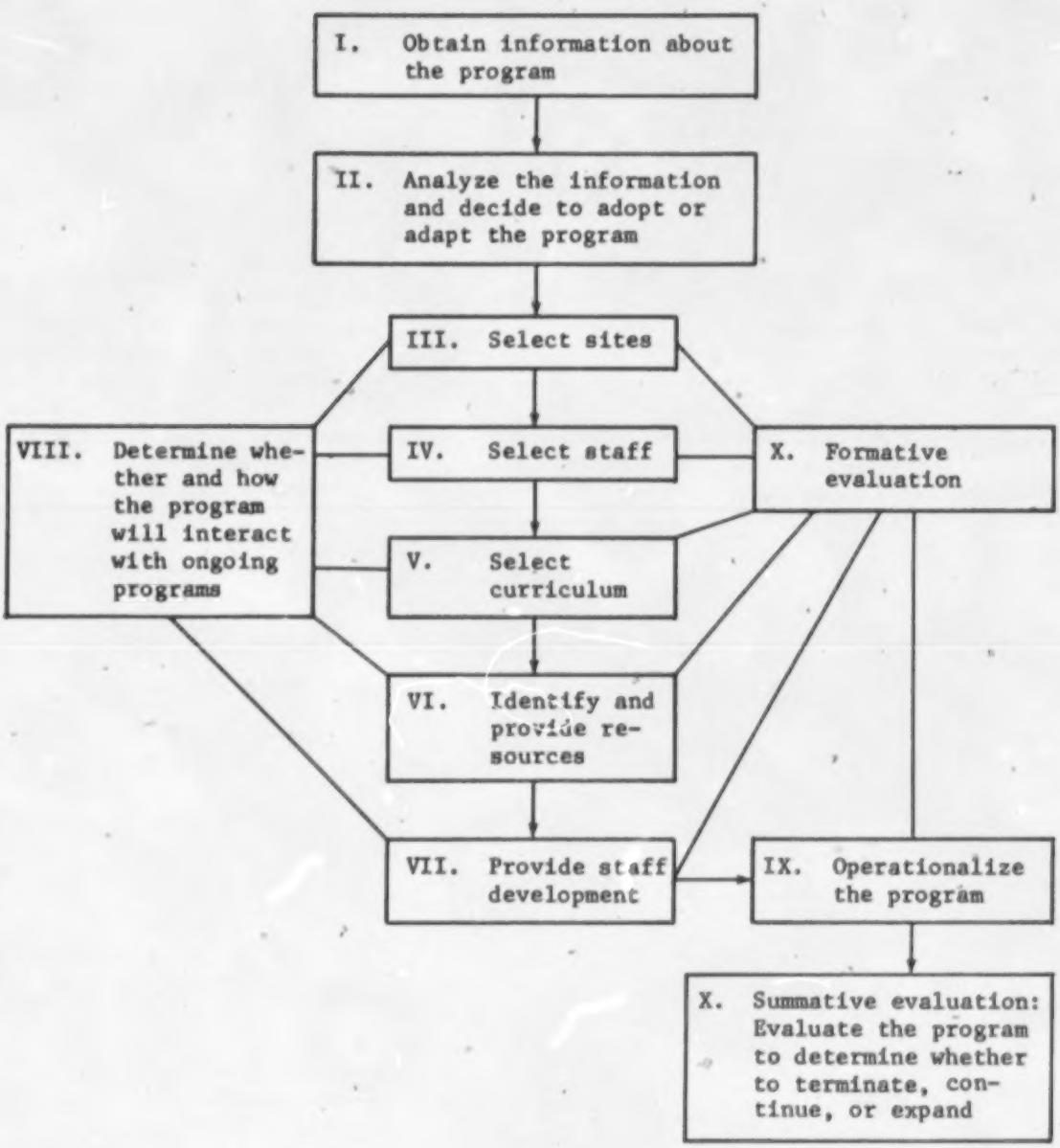
I. Obtain information about the program
II. Analyze the information and decide to adopt or adapt the program
III. Select sites
VIII. Determine whether and how the program will interact with ongoing programs
IV. Select staff
X. Formative evaluation
V. Select curriculum
VI. Identify and provide resources
VII. Provide staff development
IX. Operationalize the program
X. Summative evaluation: Evaluate the program to determine whether to terminate, continue, or expand

Figure 1. Major Steps in Program Implementation

administrative decision has been made formally to gather more information on the program, the following tasks should serve as a guide to this process. The systematic gathering of information and the involvement of key decision makers (stakeholders) will contribute to an orderly approach to decision making.

Tasks

____ Identify representatives of the stakeholder groups who need to learn about the program.

A representative group of district decision makers--those who are in a position to influence the program as well as those who may be affected by it--should be involved in the early stages of program analysis. While not all stakeholders will participate in the information gathering or selection of the program, representatives of each category should be informed of or involved in the implementation process. The following categories of stakeholders have become involved in program implementation at one time or another:

School Board members
Superintendent and Assistant Superintendents
Curriculum specialists or supervisors
Principals
Support services (e.g., health, psychological, social)
Parents from the Parent Advisory Council
Program Director
Other program or project directors and staffs
Staff developers
Teachers inside and outside the program
Teacher assistants (paraprofessionals)
Parents who are classroom volunteers
Program sponsor (Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development)
Students
Program staff of funding agency
Evaluators
Consultants (external program monitors)

Community (general public not immediately involved in the program)
State Department of Education
University and college education faculties

_____ Define the roles of the stakeholders in acquiring and sharing the information.

Who will be responsible for obtaining what information? How will it be gathered and disseminated? The representatives should make sure the district's communication procedures are used.

_____ Acquire sufficient information for rational decision making. Determine whether the information is up-to-date.

The stakeholders should determine whether the informational materials are complete or in a stage of revision. Can the information needed be acquired only through verbal presentations? Is the information sufficient to enable the stakeholders to:

Decide whether to adopt or adapt the program?
Select sites (classrooms)?
Select staff?
Select curriculum?
Identify and provide resources?
Provide staff development?
Determine whether and how the program will interact with ongoing programs?
Operationalize the program?
Evaluate the program?

_____ Determine the purpose of the program for the district.

The stakeholders should know why the district is interested in this program. What is the purpose of installing the program in the district? How will it benefit the district?

## II. Decision to Adopt or Adapt the Program

The information that was gathered should provide a basis for deciding whether to adopt the program or to modify or adapt it for use within the district. As the decision is considered, additional information may be needed to determine the compatibility between the program and the district. This series of tasks should help decision makers determine:

1. whether the program is compatible with the district's values, approach and goals;
2. what changes, if any, need to be made within the program or the district;
3. whether the program should be adopted, adapted or rejected.

The decision to adopt or adapt the program should consider the compatibility between the program and district, the changes required in the program or district, and the resources available.

### Tasks

_____ Identify the stakeholders who should participate in the decision.

It is suggested that the stakeholders who gathered information about the program also participate in this area. It may be appropriate to add key personnel from the previously identified stakeholder categories to insure the decision making capability of the group.

_____ Analyze the program to determine whether it is better than current programs and practices, or whether it can contribute to the improvement of ongoing programs and practices.

Decision makers should analyze the content and process of the program and compare the results or claims with the district's present approach. They can identify the elements of the program that do not currently exist or operate successfully within the district.

_____ Identify and analyze the School Board's or community's priorities, goals, and values and compare these with the goals and values of the program.

In comparing goals and values, decision makers should consider social, economic, political, environmental, and educational dimensions. The program's instructional content and process should be acceptable in light of these considerations.

_____ Determine whether the new program will be compatible with the priorities, goals, and values of staff actually participating in the program.

(See Selection of Staff)

_____ Compare the program's policies and procedures with the district's current policies and procedures.

It may be necessary to set new policies or procedures when the program begins, or after the program has been in existence for some time.

_____ Determine the degree of difficulty of setting up and operating the program.

Decision makers should project time needed to install the program, and the staff training time, materials, and other resources needed to operate the program. These projections will provide a basis for determining the expense and complexity of implementing the program.

_____ Project the program's effects on stakeholders.

Analyze the elements of the program in terms of stakeholder relationships, roles and functions, and in terms of teaching/learning behaviors, styles and attitudes.

_____ Decide whether a limited, pilot start or a more general approach is appropriate.

Decision makers should consider the availability of resources, including funding, personnel, skills, and materials.

## III. Selection of Sites

The schools and classrooms in which the program will be located may be determined by the funding agency guidelines. In selecting sites, decision makers should also consider the program's goals, values and instructional assumptions in relation to each site's administrator and neighborhood setting, and the students who will participate.

In site selection, the students, administrator, setting, and facility requirements should be considered.

Tasks

_____ Identify criteria for selecting the site or sites for the program.

The criteria should include facility requirements and the relationship of staff to building locations (e.g., tenured teachers, transfers). Is the site available for a demonstration approach?

_____ Select the site or sites.

## IV. Selection of Staff

The selection of the program staff is an important factor in the success or failure of the program. The staff's attitude toward and compatibility with the program's goals, values, and approach will affect the time and effort needed to operationalize the program. It would not be effective, for example, to assign to the program staff who disagree with or resist the changes it calls for. Similarly, stakeholders who can influence the program, (such as administrators and curriculum specialists) need to be committed to the program and constructive in their support. To allow adequate time for staff development, staff members should be willing to participate in the program for at least two years.

The staff's compatibility with the program's goals, values, and approach should be considered.

Staff roles should be clarified.

**Tasks**

_____ Determine the staff positions needed. The functions and responsibilities of each role should be tentatively specified.

A clear understanding of their roles will enable staff members to feel secure and devote their energy to carrying out the program.

_____ Identify and clarify the relationships between staff roles and functions in the new program and staff roles and functions in concurrent programs.

Clarification of these relationships can prevent conflicts over program authority and help integrate the new program with existing programs. For example, it may be necessary to clarify the relationship between the staff developer of the new program and the building administrator, supervisor, or curriculum specialist in the program sites.

_____ Determine the criteria for selecting program staff.

Decision makers should consider potential staff members':

- current level of skills
- leadership characteristics
- compatibility with the values of the program
- energy level (the program may initially be more demanding than existing programs)
- sense of security about themselves and their positions
- willingness to take risks
- ability to combat ambivalence
- initial commitment to the program

_____ Make sure that the staff is representative of or able to relate to parents and students in the program.

Since the program calls for the active involvement of parents and students, teachers must be able to understand and communicate with parents and students. This requirement may represent a departure from existing programs.

## V. Selection of Curriculum Content and Process

The curriculum materials required and recommended by the Responsive Education Program in support of its goals, objectives, and approach should be reviewed in relationship to the district's existing curricular emphases and decisions. For example, is the program's language approach different from the approach adopted by the Board of Education or emphasized by the administration? Is the teaching/learning process compatible with the process emphasized by the school administration?

Decision makers should compare the program's curriculum requirements with those of the district, and resolve conflicts.

### Tasks

_____ Identify curriculum requirements (content and process).

Requirements from the following areas should be identified:

Responsive Education Program
School district
State
Funding agency

_____ Analyze and compare the requirements from the above areas, noting compatibility and conflicts.

There should be no serious restrictions on the program that would reduce or nullify its potential for success.

_____ If conflicts exist, determine whether options or waivers are available to resolve or eliminate the conflicts.

Can the program accommodate the other requirements without sacrificing its own requirements? Can the program receive experimental status and have requirements waived? Are there other methods of resolving conflicts? If the differences or conflicts cannot be resolved, decision makers should consider whether the potential effect on the program is serious enough to warrant rejecting the program.

_____ Include program staff in the selection of curriculum materials.

Participation by staff members will contribute to the selection of appropriate materials, and provide an element of commitment to the program as well.

## VI. Provision of Resources

Effective allocation of resources (both physical and human) will contribute to the full implementation of the program and to moral support for the staff.

Decision makers should project the resources needed and arrange for their provision.

### Tasks

_____ On the basis of program requirements and recommendations, identify and project the resources needed in the following areas to implement the program:

Financial (preferably a two/three year commitment)
Materials (for teachers and students)
Equipment
Facilities (size, function, location)
Personnel (for staff development and for support services)

_____ Determine the level of resources needed in each of the above areas to insure program success.

On the basis of program requirements and the capabilities of program staff, determine the level of support needed to provide the conditions for successful operation of the program. It may be appropriate to work with the staff to set priorities among resources and establish timelines for obtaining the resources.

_____ Identify the resources available from the program sponsor.

Determine the level of support (including the amount, accessibility, and timing) that can be provided by the program sponsor.

_____ Identify the resources available from the school district.

Determine the level of support (including amount, accessibility, and timing) that can be provided by the school district.

_____ Assign responsibility for planning, coordinating, and providing the resources.

Resources will be most effective if they are appropriate, well-scheduled, and provided in an organized manner.

## VII. Training of Personnel (Staff Development)

Organized, continuous, and effective inservice training (staff development) is crucial to the implementation of the Responsive Education Program. The content and process of staff development are an integral part of the program itself. The tasks outlined here concern only the logistics of training.

The sequence, schedule, and approach to staff development should be determined.

**Tasks**

_____ Identify the strengths (competencies) and needs of the staff responsible for operating the program.

This knowledge will provide the basis for staff development that builds upon the participants' existing competencies and addresses their needs. It will also contribute to the use of a peer teaching approach.

_____ On the basis of the participants' identified strengths and needs as well as program guidelines, determine a tentative sequence of inservice training to implement the program.

This planning will contribute to individualized staff development. A tentative sequence is suggested because the program views learning as a dynamic process; flexibility is needed to insure that the current training topic is appropriate, timely, and a priority for the staff.

_____ Determine and schedule with the participants an ongoing inservice training program.

Administrators and the staff should recognize that inservice training is a part of the new program, and establish a schedule for staff meetings. Determine the frequency of sessions (e.g., once a month, every other week) and time. Times that may be considered include:

After school (consider time and fatigue factors)
During the school day (consider providing substitutes)
Saturdays (consider overtime pay)
Pre-school workshops (consider conflict with district requirements)

The approaches to inservice training may be:

individualized (in the classroom)
small group (e.g., by grade level, interest groups, building)
total group (group sessions contribute to program identification, morale and peer reinforcement)

_____ Allocate planning time for the staff.

An important part of each day is time for planning and reviewing the day's activities. Forty-five minutes to an hour a day should be available for this purpose.

_____ Determine the staff developer's role and relationship to other district personnel.

The authority and responsibility of the staff developer and building administrators and other supervisors or specialists should be clear. When too many decision makers exist, conflicts can easily develop, producing inconsistency in the program and frustration for the staff.

## VIII. Interaction With Other School Programs

Decision makers implementing a new program have sometimes failed to consider the program's relationship to ongoing district programs and other new programs. Because the program operates within the larger school system, it is usually not free from external influences. Decision makers should project interactions or identify them when they occur and take action to assure the stability of the program.

Decision makers should consider the program's interaction with ongoing district programs and with other new programs.

### Tasks

_____ Determine whether the new program will be self-contained or influenced by ongoing district programs, and the degree to which it may be influenced.

Decision makers should consider the program's guidelines, policies and procedures, personnel, materials, and resources.

____ Determine whether the program will be implemented at the same time other new programs are underway or beginning.

When too many new programs operate at the same time, they tend to detract from one another and invite inadvertent comparisons. Decision makers should make sure that any new program does not cause other new programs to lose their identity or prevent them from developing as originally designed. If implementation efforts are diluted, the time required for program development will increase.

____ Determine whether the new programs should interact.

To avoid the above problems, decision makers should analyze the new programs to determine whether interactions should occur and when they should occur. The analysis should carefully consider whether the interactions would enhance the programs or detract from them.

____ Determine whether the program is intended to influence other programs.

If the purpose of the program is to influence the district and bring about changes, decision makers should make sure that the effort is not premature and ineffective. The participants should be aware of this purpose at the beginning of the program.

## IX. Operationalizing the Program

When the staff has begun to operate the program, decision makers should take steps to help them maintain the potential for success.

Attention to the previously described implementation areas will assist the program staff in carrying out (operating) the program. The following tasks will help them maintain the potential for success.

Tasks

_____ Continue to provide advocacy and support.

Staff members need to know they have the support of key decision makers.

_____ Involve the staff in the defining and making of decisions about the program.

The participants in the program should be involved in decisions affecting them.

_____ Make sure that communication between the program and the district continues to be open and direct.

Communication will prevent the isolation that can occur if the program is viewed as special and not part of the ongoing operations.

_____ Provide ongoing inservice training (staff development).

_____ Provide planning time for the staff.

_____ Make sure that district-provided resources are available to the program when needed.

Timing is critical to a staff attempting to carry out a new program. The resources should be compatible with the program's goals and values.

_____ Resolve or remove problems or obstacles to the program as soon as possible.

Lingering problems will contribute to frustration and possible diversion from program goals.

____ Assist the program staff in developing mutual support, acceptance, confidence, and trust.

Being in the "avant garde" can create friction with nonprogram staff and insecurity. The process of meeting and learning together and sharing develops a sense of security and worth in staff members.

____ Attempt to make sure that principals of schools where the program is to be implemented actively support and assist program development.

The principals' actions can have an immediate and significant influence on the staff's efforts.

____ Make sure that staff outside the program as well as program staff understand the program's goals and approach.

To avoid miscommunication and misinterpretation, all staff who come in contact with the program should understand its goals and approach.

____ Monitor and balance program and district goals.

If the goals of either the program or district change during the course of implementation, a major difference could develop, causing the district to lose the benefits of the program. If the difference is irreconcilable, the district may have to terminate the program.

## X. Evaluation

Formative evaluation should provide a basis for refining the program at various stages of implementation.

Evaluation of a new program must serve a two-fold purpose. It must be <u>formative</u> in that it provides feedback and correctives at various stages of implementation. Evaluation must also be <u>summative</u> in that it provides a final assessment that decision makers can use as a basis for deciding whether to terminate, continue, or expand the program.

Tasks

Summative evaluation should provide a basis for deciding whether to terminate, continue, or expand the program.

_____ Design an evaluation plan that will provide for feedback on agreed-upon criteria.

The desired outcomes of the program by which success will be assessed should be clearly defined and agreed upon at the beginning of the program.

_____ Make sure that information is gathered with appropriate instruments and records, and/or by evaluators with experienced judgments.

Decision makers should consider the compatibility between the program's approach and the evaluation process, content, and administration.

_____ Make sure that the evaluation will meet the following criteria:

Validity (The information is what the decision makers need.)
Reliability (The information is consistent.)
Timelines (The information is available when the decision makers need it.)
Credibility (The information is appropriate to measure program goals and is trusted by program staff and district decision makers.)

When the final assessment has been made at the conclusion of program implementation, decision makers may decide to continue the program or even to expand it and incorporate it throughout the district. At this point it may be necessary to reconsider some of the implementation areas, with a focus on the total district. The existing program staff can be a valuable resource to the district for further planning and implementation.

## A SCHOOL DISTRICTS PARTICIPATING IN THE RESPONSIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM

Each of the following school districts has participated in the Responsive Education Program in connection with the U. S. Office of Education's Project Follow Through. For information about the program in operation and permission to see it, we recommend that you contact one of these school districts.

BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA
Berkeley Unified School District
1414 Walnut Street
Bungalow 30
Berkeley, California 94709
Phone: (415) 644-6202

BUFFALO, NEW YORK
Buffalo City Schools
City Hall, Room 419
Buffalo, New York 14202
Phone: (716) 842-4747

CLEVELAND, OHIO
Cleveland Public Schools
8200 Brookline Avenue
Cleveland, Ohio 44103
Phone: (216) 229-4200

DULUTH, MINNESOTA
Early Childhood Office
15 East Second Street
Duluth, Minnesota 55802
Phone: (218) 722-4731

FRESNO, CALIFORNIA
Fresno Unified School District
3132 East Fairmont Avenue
Fresno, California 93726
Phone: (209) 224-4350

GOLDSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA
Goldsboro City Schools
P. O. Box 1797
Goldsboro, North Carolina 27530
Phone: (919) 736-2381

LEBANON, NEW HAMPSHIRE
Lebanon School District
84 Hanover Street
Lebanon, New Hampshire 03766
Phone: (603) 448-3797

MARSHFIELD, WISCONSIN
Marshfield Public Schools
110 West Third Street
Marshfield, Wisconsin 54449
Phone: (715) 387-2413

OWENSBORO, KENTUCKY
Owensboro Public Schools
1334 West Eleventh Street
Owensboro, Kentucky 42301
Phone: (502) 685-2981

RENO, NEVADA
Washoe County School District
600 Apple Street
Reno, Nevada 89502
Phone: (702) 747-6395

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH
Salt Lake City School District
750 West Second North
Salt Lake City, Utah 84116
Phone: (801) 322-1275

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI
St. Louis Public Schools
1212 N. 22nd Street
St. Louis, Missouri 63106
Phone: (314) 621-3420

SUMTER, SOUTH CAROLINA
Sumter School District #17
P. O. Box 1180
Sumter, South Carolina 29150
Phone: (803) 775-0923

TACOMA, WASHINGTON
Tacoma School District #10
P. O. Box 1357
Eighth and Tacoma Avenue
Tacoma, Washington 94306
Phone: (206) 383-1811

# B THE RESPONSIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT, TRAINING, AND EVALUATION STAFF

ALLAN ABRAMS' major interests are in learning and recall, evaluation, and statistics for the behavioral sciences. He has worked on the development of new instruments and measurement procedures particularly suited to early childhood education and has had experience working with children, young adults, and adults in recreation programs. A doctoral candidate in educational psychology, Mr. Abrams is completing his dissertation on the influence of meditation on academic achievement, attitudes toward school, and self-concept of fifth- and sixth-grade children.

*J. Hay, N. Rayder, F. Lewis, A. Abrams, D. Graves*

BART BÖDY's current professional interest is in classroom process in early childhood education in relation to cognitive development and cognitive style. His previous experience has included work centering on evaluation and research functions such as: designing evaluation/research projects, formulating data collection procedures, and monitoring data flow. He has been a public health statistician for the Alameda County Health Department and systems analyst for the City and County of San Francisco Community Mental Health Services. Mr. Bödy, who received his M.A. in educational psychology, is completing his dissertation for a Ph.D. degree from the University of California, Berkeley.

MARGOT BIESTMAN holds both elementary and community college teaching credentials. She is completing M.A. graduate work in early childhood, bilingual, and special education. She has developed materials and training in the Responsive Education Program in 14 school districts. Her particular interests are: the teaching process in staff development and in helping children to increase healthy self-concepts while learning academic skills; teaching language arts in an integrated way; observation and feedback; and creative use of limits.

*I. Storace, N. De Anda, J. Cheever*

NATIVIDAD DE ANDA's background ranges from coordinating the Responsive Education Program and coordinating national workshops to observing teachers in the classroom and providing feedback to them. He has provided training regarding math curriculum, problem solving, the use of guided discovery in teaching children, teaching practices that enhance children's self-concepts, the use of systematic observation of teachers, methods of inservice training, and developing effective professional relationships with adults. His specialties are enhancement of self-concepts of both adults and children, teaching Chicano, Black, and Native American children, and teacher inservice training. He is a credentialed college teacher, licensed marriage counselor, and is completing a Ph.D. in education.

FRANCIONE N. LEWIS has experience as a teacher, supervisor, trainer, and director in preschool, elementary, high school and college programs. She has written several papers that focus on teacher training and curriculum development relating to Black children and operationalizing and assessing culturally pluralistic classrooms. Ms. Lewis trains teacher trainers to use the Responsive Education process. Also, she works with parent groups that are focusing on their decision-making and participation role in the education of their children. She holds a community college credential and is completing master's degrees in early childhood education and education administration. Ms. Lewis is currently Assistant Director of the Responsive Education Program.

*J. Monroe and J. Cheever*

JEAN MONROE currently trains teachers and teacher trainers to use the Responsive Education process to facilitate the learning of children in all curriculum areas. She works with parent groups and parent-group coordinators to assist them in facilitating parent participation in decision-making and all other aspects of their children's education. She has implemented the Responsive Education Program serving as Associate Director/Head Teacher of the National Demonstration Dav Care Center (Office of Education, Washington, D.C.), Head Teacher and then Education Coordinator for Head Start. Ms. Monroe has a lifetime California community college and elementary teaching credential and B.S. degrees in early childhood education.

NICHOLAS F. RAYDER has served in various capacities on programs relating to educational evaluation and program implementation. He has developed a wide variety of scales and measurement techniques to reflect educational change; developed and monitored comprehensive evaluation systems; and processed the results for universities and school systems. He also worked with university faculty and school personnel in self-renewal projects to develop ways to monitor and improve instruction. Mr. Rayder received his Ph.D. in educational measurement and evaluation.

*N. Rayder, J. Taylor, R. De La Torre*

JULIE T. STULAC is currently exploring the relationship between physical, institutional and social structures and interaction patterns among classroom members. Her participation in the development of a film and manual for parents and teachers concerning issues in child testing and also in the development of materials for assisting teachers to examine their own and their students' behavior supports this interest. Ms. Stulac received her doctorate in Sociology of Education at Stanford University.

JOELLYN TAYLOR's major area of interest is in reading/ language education, emphasizing both learning and teaching. She is developing materials and conducting training for those in staff development positions in Follow Through in the area of language instruction, both oral and written. Ms. Taylor, author of a teacher training learning unit on selecting and using children's literature for the 4-8 year old, has also co-authored a book of readings on reading instruction and is currently working as a guide author on the development of a new Allyn & Bacon Reading System to be published in 1978. She holds a master's and doctoral degree in educational curriculum and instruction from the University of California, Berkeley, and has taught in preschool, K-6, and university extension.

DENIS F. THOMS has been associated with school districts in the states of Wisconsin and Illinois as a secondary school teacher, assistant principal, and principal, and holds an Illinois permanent administration certificate. He received his M.S. in educational administration and his Ed.D. in secondary education, administration, and change. He has directed and conducted inservice training programs and assisted school systems implementing new programs. Mr. Thoms is currently directing the Responsive Education Program (Follow Through) in school systems located in 13 states.

*J. Monroe, D. Thoms, N. Rayder, J. Taylor, R. De La Torre*

JOANNE YINGER has developed materials and conducted training in problem solving, learning centers, and curriculum development at elementary and adult levels. She has taught in elementary and junior high schools, has been a program developer and consultant in Head Start, and has assisted school districts in implementing the Follow Through Responsive Education Program. Ms. Yinger has a lifetime California standard and community college teaching credential, and is earning her doctoral degree in educational development and teacher training.

JULIA CHEEVER is a journalist and editor who has published articles on women, the arts, and other topics. She was recently the author/editor of a junior college textbook on social problems. From 1970 to 1973, she worked as an editor for the Responsive Education Program. She has also designed curriculum and educational games for elementary-grade and junior-high-school students. She holds a B.A. in literature and an M.J. in journalism

*J. Yinger, J. Diaz de Leon, M. Biestman, F. Lewis*

THE FAR WEST LABORATORY FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT's goal is to contribute to the improvement of educational practices. Through educational development activities, a staff of 220 works to help children and adults have more and better opportunities to learn.

Educational development is a new discipline. It involves, first, focusing on an important but specific area in need of improvement and then inventing, field testing, and providing a generally useful solution to that problem or need. The solution may be a new self-contained product or an alternative process or system to be used by educators, by students, by parents, or by all of them together.

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